

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part 1 – Preface, Introduction, and Overview

- 1.1 Preface
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Overview
 - Defining a Charter School
 - Defining a Charter
 - New and Conversion Charter Schools
 - Charter School Governance
 - Number of Charters per Year

Part 2 – Establishing a Charter School

- 2.1 Establishing a Charter School
- 2.2 The Exploration Phase
 - Investigating State Laws and Policies
 - Reviewing Authorized Chartering Entity Rules and Policies
 - Assembling a Core Founding Group
 - Designing a Comprehensive Charter School Plan
- 2.3 The Application Phase
 - Drafting the Charter Petition
 - Incorporating and Filing for Non-Profit Status
 - Presenting the Petition to an Authorizer
 - Approval Process for a New Charter School
 - Approval Process for a Conversion Charter School
- 2.4 The Pre-Operations Phase
 - Admission Procedures
 - Hiring a Charter School Administrator
 - School Accreditation
- 2.5 The Operations Phase
 - Pupil Performance, Evaluation, and Statewide Testing Reporting
 - Amending the Charter
 - Notices of Defect
 - The Revocation Process

Part 3 – Charter School Governance

- 3.1 Board Governance
 - Governance Development
 - Selecting Initial Board Members
 - Preparing Future Board Members
 - Policy Development
 - Meetings
 - Governing Board Annual Evaluations

Part 4 – The Business of Operating a Charter School

- 4.1 The Business of Operating a Charter School
- 4.2 Organizing as a Nonprofit Corporation
- 4.3 Budgets and Financial Management
- 4.4 Funding for Charter Schools
 - State Funding
 - Federal Funding
 - Public Charter School Grant
 - Federal Title IV Funding
 - Transportation Funding
 - Limited English Proficient Funding
 - Other Funding Sources
- 4.5 Charter School Facilities
 - Developing a Facilities Plan
 - Assessing Building Needs
 - Evaluating and Selecting a Site
 - Creative Site Options
 - Financing Facilities
- 4.6 Charter School Personnel
 - General Information about Charter School Personnel
 - Certificated Personnel Support Program
 - Social Security
 - Federal and State Tax Withholding
 - Unemployment Compensation
 - Public Employee Retirement System
 - Health Insurance

Part 5 – Additional School Services

- 5.1 Additional School Services
- 5.2 Services for Special Education Students
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act
 - Definition of Special Education
 - Eligibility for Special Education
 - Essential Components of a Special Education Program
 - Other Laws Governing the Provision of Services
- 5.3 Services for Limited English Proficient Students
 - Defining Limited English Proficient Students
 - Essential Components of an LEP Program
 - Reporting Requirements
 - Accountability for Serving LEP Students
 - Language Proficiency Assessments
 - District and State Coordination
- 5.4 Services for Gifted and Talented Students
 - Definition of Gifted and Talented
 - Laws Governing the Provision of Services
 - Essential Components of a Gifted and Talented Program
 - Student Files, Documentation, and Record Keeping
- 5.5 Migrant Education Programs
 - Goal of the Migrant Education Program

- Definition of Migratory Child
- Providing Migrant Education Services
- Essential Components of a Migrant Education Program
- 5.6 Child Nutrition Programs
 - Options for Providing Food Service
 - Relationship between Food and Student Learning
 - Free or Reduced Lunch
 - Data for Title I Funding
- 5.7 Student Transportation
 - Qualifications for Bus Drivers
 - Procedures for Financial and Programmatic Auditing
 - Determining State Support of Transportation Costs
 - Figuring Estimated Costs into the Advanced Payment
 - Transportation Privileges and Suspension
- 5.8 School Counseling and Student Assistance

Appendices

- A. Useful Information
 - Definitions and Abbreviations
 - Contacts, Resources, and Links
- B. The Charter Petition
 - Required Elements of the Petition
 - Format for Submission to the Public Charter School Commission
 - Sample Petition and Budget
 - Developing Performance Goals
- C. The Approval Process
 - SDE Sufficiency Review Form
 - Public Charter School Commission Staff Petition Evaluation Form
 - Readiness Self-Assessment
 - Sample Authorizer Questions
 - Approval Process Flow Charts
- D. Tools for Governing Boards
 - Pre-Opening Checklist
 - Public Charter School Commission Oversight Visit Checklist
 - Sample Prospective Board Member Survey
 - Sample Administrator Contract
 - Improving Principal Evaluation
 - Creating Effective Governing Boards

Preface

This manual is intended for use by charter school planning groups and the boards of charter schools already in operation. School district boards may also find it helpful in learning about charter schools and the process by which they are authorized. The manual's goals are:

- To help charter school petitioners maintain and grow their vision
- To explain the required elements of charter school petitions
- To guide charter school petitioners through the application process
- To guide the development of charter school governing boards
- To provide resources including state, federal, payroll, and insurance requirements, as well as a variety of sample documents

Experience with charter schools around the nation has made plain that, despite the differences among individual charter schools, certain elements tend to determine how successful a charter school will be. This manual will identify the essential components of successful charter schools in the hope that future schools may be established and operated in the most effective manner.

Any of the sample documents included in this manual may be used as working documents. Although these documents were originally tailored for use in specific charter schools that may be significantly different from your own, the samples should serve as a guide as you develop your own charter school concept. You should not adopt any of these documents without first amending them to fit the circumstances of your own charter school.

Please note that this manual is not produced by the State of Idaho, nor is it intended to be an official or comprehensive guide. No information herein should be considered a substitute for the advice of your attorney.

Introduction

In 1998, the Idaho Legislature passed legislation allowing for the creation of charter schools in Idaho. Chapter 52, Title 33 of Idaho Code provides opportunity for citizens to establish and maintain public charter schools that operate independently from the existing public school system. The legislation is intended to:

- Improve student learning
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students
- Include the use of different and innovative teaching methods
- Utilize virtual distance learning and online learning
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site
- Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system
- Hold schools accountable for meeting measurable student standards

In short, charter schools agree to shoulder increased accountability in exchange for increased autonomy. Since 1998, Idaho's charter schools have created opportunities for new, innovative, and flexible ways of educating students within the public school system.

People establish charter schools for a variety of reasons. However, charter school founders generally fall into two groups: grassroots organizations of parents, teachers and community members; and existing schools converting to charter status. Three of the most common motivations for creating a charter school are: 1) to realize an educational vision, 2) to gain autonomy, and 3) to serve a special population. Parents and teachers choose charter schools primarily for educational reasons such as high academic standards, small class size, innovative approaches, or educational philosophies in line with their own.

Before a charter school petition is written, ideas grow within a dedicated, courageous individual or group. These people dedicate hours to discussing their vision with others, identifying and inspiring talented and willing volunteers, studying state laws and rules, and finally drafting a document known as the charter school petition.

Along the way, charter school founders must acquire political savvy to move wisely within their local school districts and learn how use the press as an ally. They must also inspire parents with a vision that will motivate them to leave their living rooms on many nights to attend board meetings, support the petition, and ultimately enroll their children in the new charter school.

When the petition is finally approved, the creation of the charter school itself begins. Since most charter schools have no paid staff until the fiscal year

Preface, Introduction, and Overview:

1.2 – Introduction

during which the school opens, additional hours of volunteer time are required to ensure everything is in order before the school year commences.

However, once the doors open, the excitement of finally seeing children in the classrooms will dispel any fatigue. The primary task now becomes the guarding of the charter school's philosophy and mission in the face of daily challenges. With each success reflected in student performance, parental satisfaction, and student morale comes the reward for countless hours of work. To watch a dream unfurl into reality is deeply gratifying.

Overview

Defining a Charter School

A charter school is a semi-autonomous, outcome-based public school of choice that operates with a governing board to oversee its philosophy, educational program, and activities. It is a nonprofit, publicly funded, and nonsectarian entity that operates independently within the existing public school system and is governed by the conditions of its approved charter and all federal and state laws. Charter schools are:

Legislatively Authorized

Independent charter schools require state legislation to authorize their existence. Idaho Code outlines general specifications and requirements for establishing charter schools and regulates the number of charter schools permitted to open each year. The chartering process may be used to create a new school or convert an existing school.

Citizen Initiated

Parents or other community members initiate and develop charter school petitions, which are then granted or denied by an authorized chartering entity.

Public Schools

Charter schools are public schools. They are mandated to teach all students, not just gifted or well-financed students. They may not charge tuition or fees for attendance or participation in the charter school's educational program. Charter schools may not have religious affiliations. Enrollment must be open and free to any child; when demand for admission exceeds the school's capacity, students are selected randomly by lottery.

A charter school cannot discriminate against any student on any basis prohibited by federal and state law, including disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services.

Charter schools are not magnet schools. Students don't have to show special skills or pass tests for admission as is the case in some magnets. However, charter schools may have specific organizing themes and educational philosophies that guide their work. Therefore, students with particular interests may be attracted by the vision that guides a particular charter school.

Outcome-Based

A charter document, which is negotiated between a charter school's founders and its authorizer, sets forth detailed conditions and expectations for each charter school. Charter schools that fail to meet the conditions of their charters may have their charters revoked.

Models for Change

Preface, Introduction, and Overview

1.3 Overview

Charter schools are intended to serve as educational experimentation labs aimed at developing new teaching and learning strategies that can be utilized in other, more traditional public schools.

Defining a Charter

A charter is a document spelling out a charter school's educational program, standards, governance and operations. Section 33-5202A(2), Idaho Code, defines a charter as "the grant of authority approved by the authorized chartering entity to the board of directors of the public charter school."

New and Conversion Charter Schools

In Idaho, a charter school may be created "from scratch" or by converting an existing public school to charter status. Private and parochial schools may not convert to charter status, nor may a charter be granted to, or operated by, a for-profit entity.

Charter School Governance

All Idaho charter schools are required to be organized and managed under the Idaho Nonprofit Corporation Act. It follows that, as a nonprofit organization, every charter school will have a board of directors. The law states that members of the board of directors are public agents authorized by an authorized chartering entity. Pursuant to Section 33-5202A, Idaho Code, "authorized chartering entity," means either the local board of trustees of an Idaho school district or the Public Charter School Commission.

Charter schools must comply with state and federal laws, rules, and regulations. However, they are not bound by all the rules of the State Board of Education or local school district policies. It is the responsibility of a charter school's board to ensure that the school operates in compliance with all applicable statutes, rules, regulations, and policies.

Generally, a charter school's governing board is composed of teachers, parents, and community members selected through a process spelled out in the charter.

Number of Charter Schools per Year

The Idaho Legislature has created a controlled procedure for the establishment of charter schools. Section 33-5203, Idaho Code, establishes the following designation regarding the maximum number of charter schools and their geographic distribution:

Not more than six (6) public charter schools may begin education instruction in any one (1) school year. Not more than one (1) new public charter school may begin educational instruction that is physically located within any one (1) school district in any one (1) school year. Public virtual charter schools approved by the Public Charter School Commission are not included in any one school district, and, therefore, do not count as charter schools beginning instruction in any one school district.

Establishing a Charter School

The establishment of a new or conversion charter school is a long and detailed process involving many hours of research and legwork, most of which must be accomplished by volunteer individuals inspired by a shared vision. It is highly recommended that you read through this entire manual before beginning to draft your petition, as doing so will give you a clear perspective on the timeframe and scope of your undertaking.

In this section, we will explore the phases involved in the charter school development process. These phases can be thought of as Exploration, Application, Pre-Operations, and Operations.

The Exploration Phase: Surveying the Scene and Laying the Groundwork

This phase includes exploring your reasons for choosing to start a charter school, gathering basic background information on charter schools in your state, and assembling a charter school design team and framework. This is also the time to survey your community's readiness for a charter school.

Some petitioners begin the process somewhat informally, while others are more deliberate in their efforts, developing a strategic or business plan. Many begin by gathering start-up funds from public or private sources, or from their own pockets. Start-up funds may also be obtained from federal or state planning grants, private foundation grants, or corporate grants. Regardless of how the planning phase is structured or funded, prospective charter school developers should complete the following steps:

Investigate State Laws and Policies

You should carefully review Idaho's laws and rules early in the exploration process, as state laws authorizing charter schools change over time. Idaho Code 33-5201 et seq. and IDAPA 08.02.04, Rules Governing Public Charter Schools, should be considered required reading for all potential charter school petitioners. Since existing law may be under revision or new laws proposed, you may also wish to investigate the status of pending legislation or rules related to charter schools.

Review Authorized Chartering Entity Rules and Policies

Charter schools in Idaho may be authorized by local school district boards or the Idaho Public Charter School Commission. In appeal cases, the State Board of Education may also authorize a charter. These authorized chartering entities often have rules, policies, or guidelines to explain how the charter school legislation shall be implemented.

For instance, IDAPA 08.03.01, "Rules Governing the Public Charter School Commission," outlines the timelines and processes for petition contents, review, and evaluation by the Commission. Your local school district may have adopted its own policies or guidelines. It is recommended that you contact your future authorizer to obtain a copy of applicable guidelines.

Assemble a Core Founding Group and Access Experts

Your core founding group will move your charter school from dream to reality. These individuals define the proposed school's vision and mission, write the petition, and make presentations to the authorizer. Some of them may eventually operate the school. This work requires a vast quantity of time and a wide variety of skills. Your core team's expertise should be broadly based, but team members' vision should be narrowly focused on a shared educational philosophy.

Expertise in the following areas is optimal:

Establishing a Charter School

2.2 The Exploration Phase

- Curriculum and instruction
- Community relations and marketing
- Finance and fundraising
- Governance and management
- Legal issues, particularly educational law
- Real estate
- Student assessment
- Charter school documents

When recruiting your core founding group, you should seek out entrepreneurs; educators; lawyers; accountants; key community members; business people with personnel, management, and marketing experience; and visionaries. You will need individuals with strong organizational skills and enthusiasm for quality education. The expertise within your core founding group may be supplemented through the local business community, colleges and universities, parents, and other community members.

Design a Comprehensive Charter School Plan

Many charter school founders come together with an idea of what they want to accomplish already in mind. This idea needs to be fleshed out as a comprehensive design framework that includes the following:

- A clear mission and vision
- An overview of the educational program
- A description of governance and administrative structure
- A staffing plan
- A statement of facilities needs, and
- A rough budget

By the time you begin the transition from the exploration phase to the application phase, you should have a clear picture of the charter school you envision and be prepared to begin the work involved in developing it.

The Application Phase: Drafting, Presenting, and Seeking Approval of the Petition

Once you have assembled a core founding group, you will move into the application phase, which includes drafting your proposed charter and submitting it for consideration by an authorized chartering entity.

Drafting the Charter Petition

Prior to approval by an authorized chartering entity, a charter document is known as a petition. The purpose, content, and format of individual petitions vary widely. However, all strong petitions include well-developed narrative and thought around the following key components:

- Clear mission statement
- Specific, measurable goals
- Statement of why the charter school is needed
- Description of the educational program
- Specific learning objectives for students
- Methods of student assessment
- Financial plan and 3 to 5 year budget projection
- Governance and/or organizational model
- Personnel policies
- Student enrollment and discipline policies
- Proposed site and facilities
- Insurance quotes
- Compliance with state and federal regulations
- A pre-determined oversight and evaluation process
- Articles of incorporation, bylaws, and policies

Idaho Code requires the inclusion of certain elements in every charter petition. A chart listing these elements is included in Appendix B. It is followed by a sample petition, which will help you understand how each element looks in an actual charter. Below is additional detail regarding several key components of a charter petition:

Vision Statement

Your vision statement should define your proposed charter school's core values, establishing its identity and sense of direction. A strong vision statement deals with the charter school's basic, underlying philosophy about education and learning. It should discuss reasons for schooling and basic assumptions about human nature.

For instance, if you believe that children are nature-driven to learn and do best when free to explore their environments and choose what to study, that should be a part of your vision statement. If, on the other hand, you believe children need a prescribed curriculum delivered in a teacher directed manner, your vision statement should state as much.

Establishing a Charter School

2.3 The Application Phase

The following questions are designed to help you develop your vision statement:

- What is this charter school trying to accomplish, and what are its values?
- Why is this charter school different?
- How will this charter school meet its goals?
- How will this charter school know if it accomplishes its goals?
- What age and grade level is this charter school going to serve?

Mission Statement

After completing a vision statement, you should develop a clear, concise mission statement describing your charter school's expected outcome. A strong mission statement defines the logical product of the school's educational program and contains specifics that differentiate your charter school from other charter schools and traditional public schools.

Because your vision statement and mission statement together form the blueprint by which the charter school will be approved and implemented, and are the statements most read by parents, they should be tested repeatedly on several small groups of parents before being adopted. The wording should be sufficiently clear that different people reading the statements visualize the same charter school.

Poorly written mission statements often plague opening charter schools with unhappy parents and staff who expected what they thought the words meant, rather than what was actually intended. Be very careful with words like *basics*, *individualized instruction*, *experience-based learning*, *student-led learning*, *at-risk students*, etc. Such words conjure up a variety of images that must be defined concisely in supplementary documentation to clearly portray the charter school's mission.

The process of developing and clarifying your vision and mission statements can serve as an excellent opportunity to build community support for your charter school as well as to confirm that the statements themselves are clear. Small community meetings work best, as they allow adequate time for discussion. Your goal should always be to develop a clear, concise description of the charter school's reason for existing.

Goals

Charter schools have been called the "most accountable public schools" because they are required to have measurable goals that express the intended overall outcome of their educational programs – and prove their ability to meet them. Well-developed goals and objectives are essential for fulfillment of the statutory requirements of the charter school application.

When creating goals, make them SMART:

Specific
Measurable

Establishing a Charter School

2.3 The Application Phase

Attainable
Relative, and
Time specific

Be sure to review the pages on Developing Performance Goals and Measures provided in Appendix B.

Choosing a Curriculum

Because a charter school's curriculum will comprise its educational program and standards, your chosen curriculum should reflect the school's stated vision and mission. To allow for future flexibility, avoid identifying specific textbooks and software in your charter petition. Instead, focus on the teaching methods, such as cooperative learning or heterogeneous grouping, that will be used.

The curriculum section of your petition will detail what students should know and be able to do upon completion of the charter school's program. The curriculum for each subject and grade level should include the methods of instruction and types of instructional materials the charter school plans to use.

Evaluating Student Performance

Specific guidance about types of assessment tools and frequency of assessment should be included in your petition to ensure regular student performance assessment. You will need to assess students initially to obtain baseline data and define any desired additional profile information. As the school operates, its governing board should obtain regular, periodic reviews of assessment data by someone knowledgeable in the area. These reviews should result in an analysis of the curriculum, the educational program, and the effectiveness of charter school practices.

As you draft your petition, bear in mind that technical assistance is available from the State Department of Education and the Idaho Charter School Network.

Incorporating and Filing for Non-Profit Status

Charter schools in Idaho are operated by governing boards that are organized as non-profit corporations. Prior to submitting your petition to an authorizer, you will need to establish your formal organization. This will involve drafting and filing articles of incorporation; filing for nonprofit status; recruiting and installing your governing board; and drafting bylaws, policies, and an administrative structure. Details regarding the drafting and filing of articles of incorporation may be found in Section 3 of this manual.

Presenting Your Petition to an Authorizer

After drafting your petition, you should plan on spending many months navigating the charter authorization process. The Readiness Self-Assessment provided in Appendix C is designed to help you determine whether you are prepared to begin the process.

Your first step will be to submit your petition to the State Department of Education (SDE) for a sufficiency review. A copy of the SDE's sufficiency review form is provided in Appendix C. The SDE will provide you with a completed

Establishing a Charter School

2.3 The Application Phase

form, which will aid you in revising your charter to add any missing elements and improve existing sections.

After making adjustments based on findings in the sufficiency review, you will submit your petition to an authorized chartering entity (authorizer). All proposed brick and mortar charter schools must submit their petitions to the board of the school district in which they are to be physically located. The district board has three options: it may approve your petition, deny your petition (at which point you may pursue an appeals process), or refer your petition to the Public Charter School Commission for consideration. By referring a petition to the Commission, the district board relinquishes all authority over and responsibility for the charter school. Note: Virtual public charter school petitioners must submit their petitions directly to the Commission, rather than to the local district board.

In most cases, you will actually submit your petition to the authorizer's staff. You and authorizer staff should work together to ensure that the petition contains all necessary components set out in Section 33-5205(3), Idaho Code, and that your budget is complete and realistic. Authorizer staff may provide you with a petition evaluation form such as that used by the Commission's staff, a copy of which is included in Appendix C.

It is best to work with authorizer staff to ensure your petition is ready and meets staff requirements rather than having the authorizer review a petition that still needs improvement. By not working with authorizer staff, you run a greater risk of having your petition denied. Additional hours spent prior to the authorizer's review could save months in the long run.

Petitioners and authorizer staff may not always agree on the contents of the petition or budget. In such cases, petitioners are not required make adjustments to their charter. You are always free to leave your petition and budget as they were originally submitted. When the petition is considered in an open meeting by the authorizer, you will have the opportunity to discuss why you feel the petition should remain the way it has been presented. The authorizer will then decide whether the petition is sufficient to be approved.

There will usually be two hearings before the authorizer. The first will be a public hearing held within 60 days of receipt of the petition, at which the authorizer will consider the merits of the petition and levels of employee and parental support. Petitioners should be prepared to make a formal presentation to the authorizer and answer many questions. A list of sample questions is included in Appendix C.

Your formal presentation should contain information about the proposed charter school's chosen curriculum and method of delivery, the budget and assumptions used to arrive at the information it contains, the exact location of the charter school, the type of facilities to be used, and the number of students you expect to enroll. You may also want to be prepared to give a brief biography

Establishing a Charter School

2.3 The Application Phase

of each founder to help the authorizer understand the expertise available to your governing board. During this initial presentation of the petition, the authorizer's staff will generally make a recommendation to the authorizer. In most cases, the authorizer will then ask for additional information and clarification from the petitioners, to be presented at a second hearing.

The authorizer is required to either approve or deny the petition at the first meeting, or hold a second hearing within 60 days after the first hearing, unless both parties agree to another 60-day extension for a total of 120 days. The most common reason for an extension is to allow the petitioners ample time to gather and prepare any additional information requested by the authorizer.

As you can see, time frames for approval of a petition can range from 120 days to 210 days. It is important for petitioners to bear this in mind when submitting their charter to an authorizer. *There is a statutory requirement that petitions be submitted no later than September 1 and approved no later than January 1 in order to open in the following school year.* If you wait until the latest possible date (September 1) and the maximum number of days is used, your approval will come too late. All petitioners are strongly encouraged to apply to their authorizers as early as possible.

A limited number of charter schools may open in Idaho each year. As new charter schools are approved each year, the State Board of Education assigns them numbers on a chronological basis. The six public charter schools authorized to begin instruction during a given school year will be those that have been assigned the lowest numbers. Only one public charter school may be opened within an individual school district in any given year. Schools located in districts containing another newly approved charter school assigned a lower number will not be eligible to open in the same year.

Below are step-by-step outlines of the approval processes for both new and conversion charter schools:

Approval Process for a New Charter School

1. Petitioners begin the authorizing process by submitting six copies of the petition to the State Department of Education for an initial review. Within 30 days, the State Department of Education must complete the initial sufficiency review.
2. Petitioners may make amendments to the petition based on comments included with the sufficiency review, then submit the petition and sufficiency review to the authorized chartering entity. *All petitions must be submitted to an authorized chartering entity no later than September 1 in order to be eligible to open in the fall of the following year.*
3. Within 60 days of receipt of the petition, the authorizer must hold a public hearing to discuss the provisions of the charter. (Note:

Establishing a Charter School

2.3 The Application Phase

The Commission may extend an additional 30 days if both parties agree.) Within 60 days of the public hearing, the authorizer must take action on the petition; however, this deadline may be extended for an additional 60 days if the petition fails to contain all the required information or both parties agree.

- a. If the petition is approved, the petitioners must submit a copy of the approved petition and notification of approval from the authorizer to the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education. The State Board of Education will assign a number to the petitioner and notify the petitioners of their proposed opening date. The school may open in the fall of the year assigned by the State Board of Education. *Approved charters must be received by the State Board of Education no later than January 1 in order to open in the fall of that year.*
- b. If the petition is referred to the Public Charter School Commission, petitioners return to step 2 (above) and submit their petition to the Commission.
- c. If the petition is denied, petitioners may appeal to the State Department of Education:

Appeals Process for a Denied Petition

1. Within 30 days of the denial of the petition, petitioners may appeal the decision by filing a Notice of Appeal and two completed copies of the record with the State Department of Education (SDE). A copy of the appeal must also be filed with the authorizer and the State Board of Education (SBE).
2. Within 10 days of receipt of the appeal, the SDE must hire a Hearing Officer to hear the appeal and forward a copy of the record to this Hearing Officer. Within 30 days of receipt of the record, the Hearing Officer must review the petition and hold a hearing on the appeal. Within 10 days of the hearing, the Hearing Officer must issue a written recommendation.
3. Within 30 days of issuance of the recommendation, the authorizer must hold a public hearing to review the recommendation. Within 10 days of the public hearing, the authorizer must either affirm or reverse its initial decision. This final decision must be in writing and contain findings explaining the reasons for the authorizer's decision.
 - a. If the authorizer reverses its initial decision and approves the petition, the petitioners must submit a copy of the approved petition and notification of approval from the authorizer to the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education. The State Board of Education will assign a number to the petitioner and notify the petitioners of their proposed opening date. The school may

Establishing a Charter School

2.3 The Application Phase

open in the fall of the year assigned by the State Board of Education.

- b. If the authorizer affirms its initial decision to deny the petition, the petitioners may, within 21 days, appeal to the State Board of Education by filing a Notice of Appeal and two completed copies of the record with the State Board of Education. A copy of the notice of appeal must also be submitted to the authorized chartering entity. Within 60 days of receipt of the appeal, the State Board of Education must hold a public hearing to review the final decision of the authorized chartering entity. Within 60 days of the public hearing, the State Board of Education will issue a final decision.
 - i. If the State Board of Education approves the petition, the petitioners next submit a copy of the approved petition and notification of approval from the authorizer to the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education. The State Board of Education will assign a number to the petitioner and notify the petitioners of their proposed opening date. The charter school may open in the fall of the year assigned by the State Board of Education. In these cases, the Public Charter School Commission will become the charter school's authorizing entity.
 - ii. If the State Board of Education denies the petition, the petitioners may appeal the decision to the District Court.
 - iii. If the State Board of Education remands the petition back to the authorizer, the petitioners and school district are encouraged to begin working on the petition again in hopes of coming to consensus.
 - iv. If the State Board of Education redirects the petition to another authorized chartering entity (the Public Charter School Commission), the petitioners may submit their petition to the Public Charter School Commission and begin the process again.

Approval Process for a Conversion Charter School

1. Petitioners begin the authorizing process by submitting six copies of the petition to the State Department of Education for an initial review. Within 30 days, the State Department of Education must complete the initial sufficiency review.
2. Petitioners may make amendments to the petition based on comments received on the sufficiency review, then submit the petition and sufficiency review to the local school district board.
All petitions must be submitted to the authorizer no later than

Establishing a Charter School

2.3 The Application Phase

September 1 in order to be eligible to open in the fall of the following year.

3. Within 60 days of receipt of the petition, the local district board must hold a public hearing. Within 60 days of the public hearing, the district board must take action on the petition; however, this deadline may be extended for an additional 60 days if both parties agree.
 - a. If the petition is approved and there is no appeal, the petitioners next submit a copy of the approved petition and notification of approval from the authorizer to the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education. The State Board of Education will assign a number to the petitioner and notify the petitioners of their proposed opening date. The charter school may open in the fall of the year assigned by the State Board of Education. *Note: Approved charters must be received by the State Board of Education no later than January 1 in order to open in the fall of that year.*
 - b. If the petition is approved, other interested persons may appeal to the State Department of Education:

Appeals Process if Persons Oppose the Approved Conversion

1. If the local district board approves a petition for the conversion of an existing traditional public school within the district over the objection of 30 or more persons or employees of the district, persons opposing the petition may, within 30 days, appeal the approval decision by filing a Notice of Appeal and two complete copies of the record with the State Department of Education. A copy of the appeal must also be filed with the authorizer and the State Board of Education. Within 10 days of receipt of the appeal, the SDE must hire a Hearing Officer to hear the appeal. Within 30 days of receipt of the record, the Hearing Officer must hold a hearing on the appeal. Within 10 days of the hearing, the Hearing Officer must issue a recommended decision. Within 30 days of issuance of the recommended decision, the authorizer must hold a public hearing to review the recommended decision issued by the Hearing Officer. Within 10 days of the public hearing, the authorizer must issue a final decision reversing or affirming their initial decision. This decision must be in writing and contain findings explaining the reasons for the authorizer's decision.
 - a. If the authorizer affirms its initial decision and approves the charter, petitioners next submit a copy of the approved petition and notification of approval from the authorizer to the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education.

Establishing a Charter School

2.3 The Application Phase

- b. If the authorizer reverses its initial decision and denies the charter, the decision is final and there are no further appeals.

Flow charts illustrating the approval process for both new and conversion charter schools are available in Appendix C for easy reference.

The Pre-Operations Phase: Preparing to Open the Approved Charter School

The pre-operations phase follows the approval of the petition and centers on the establishment and opening of the physical school. Below are some pointers for navigating this phase:

- Develop a detailed plan and timeline listing all the tasks that need to be accomplished before doors open. The plan should identify who will address each issue, when, and how.
- Establish formal operating agreements with non-district service providers to identify any services they will provide and the terms under which they will provide them.
- Establish relationships with community groups, supporters, the local school district, the media, and other potential partners.
- Advertise in your attendance area and enroll students.
- Recruit and hire staff.
- Formalize your instructional program. Select and purchase instructional materials, choose methods of assessing student achievement, establish the charter school calendar, and plan for professional development.
- Secure facility and support services such as fiscal support (accounting, budget, payroll, banking, auditing, and purchasing), transportation, food service, insurance, staff benefits, telecommunications, legal advice, custodial service, etc.

A Pre-Opening Checklist is included in Appendix D to assist you in identifying the tasks that must be accomplished. Below is further discussion of some important tasks you will complete during this phase:

Admission Procedures

IDAPA 08.02.04 sets out model admission procedures for Idaho's charter schools. If you select alternate procedures, they must be described in your charter and approved by your authorizing entity.

Enrollment Opportunities

You are required to inform the public of the opportunity to enroll their children in your charter school. Your goal should be to give as much notice and information as possible to the parents and citizens of the area about the enrollment opportunities and deadlines.

IDAPA 08.02.04.203.02 requires charter schools to disseminate enrollment information in both English and Spanish. The information must be posted in highly visible and prominent locations and must be disseminated at least three months in advance of the enrollment deadline. Furthermore, charter schools must disseminate press releases to media outlets in the area on at least three occasions, beginning not later than fourteen days prior to the enrollment

Establishing a Charter School

2.4 The Pre-Operations Phase

deadline. Once your enrollment deadline is established, you cannot change it without repeating this process.

Requests for Admission

Requests for admission must be submitted in writing and contain the name, grade level, address, and telephone number of each prospective student in the family. Written requests for admissions received after the enrollment deadline has passed may not be included in the lottery; rather, these names should be added to the bottom of the waiting lists after the lottery, in the order in which they were received.

Equitable Selection Process

Most charter schools establish an initial capacity for student enrollment. Often, the schools receive applications for more students than they can enroll. In order to determine which students may attend the charter school, you must use a fair and equitable selection process. Most charter schools accomplish this by conducting an enrollment lottery as outlined in IDAPA 08.02.04.203.09. As a new school, you may wish to contact other, existing charter schools to gather information and suggestions for conducting a lottery. Bear in mind, however, that the lottery is a complex process and you should review others' suggestions carefully to be certain of full compliance with Idaho statutes and rules.

The lottery must be conducted in a meeting that is open to the public and advertised in advance to give parents and community members the opportunity to attend. Consider using an outside entity to assist in conducting your lottery, thereby minimizing any perception of impropriety and ensuring that the lottery is fair and equitable.

The enrollment lottery should be conducted several months in advance of the charter school's opening day. This will allow the governing board ample time to notify those students who have been chosen and to make adjustments if those students and their parents choose not to attend the charter school. It will also allow parents and students not selected in the lottery time to make other arrangements. Finally, it will give the governing board the opportunity to gather support from parents who now have a reason to become active and involved in the charter school.

Admission Preferences

Charter schools may, but are not required to, use certain preferences when conducting their lotteries. Section 33-5205(3), Idaho Code and IDAPA 08.02.04.203 set out the hierarchy of allowable preferences.

If you choose to use preferences for the initial enrollment of students, the selection hierarchy shall be in the following order:

Establishing a Charter School

2.4 The Pre-Operations Phase

- Children of founders (This admission preference shall be limited to not more than 10% of the capacity of the public charter school);
- Siblings of pupils already selected by the lottery or other random method;
- Prospective students residing within the attendance area of the charter school;
- Students selected by an equitable selection process such as a lottery or other random method.

If you choose to use preferences for the enrollment of students in subsequent years, the selection hierarchy shall be in following order:

- Already enrolled pupils returning to the public charter school in the second or any subsequent year of its operation;
- Children of founders (This admission preference shall be limited to not more than 10% of the capacity of the public charter school);
- Siblings of pupils already enrolled in the public charter school;
- Prospective students residing within the attendance area of the charter school;
- Students selected by an equitable selection process such as a lottery or other random method.

No preferences other than those listed above may be used. If you have questions about lottery preferences, you should work closely with your authorizer to answer them before the lottery takes place.

Waiting Lists

As the lottery is conducted and each student's name is drawn, the names are placed on a list by grade level. Once the maximum capacity for each grade level has been met, the remaining students' names will be placed on a waiting list for each grade level. These waiting lists will be used if there is an opening at any time during the year, including any time prior to the opening of the charter school. If there is an opening, you are required to offer that opening to the first student on the waiting list for the appropriate grade level.

Notification After the Lottery

After completing the lottery, you must notify all families who submitted written requests for admission. With respect to students who have been chosen to attend the charter school, the notification should be an offer letter. This offer needs to be signed by the parent or guardian and returned to the charter school by a date specified by the charter school. If the parent or guardian declines, or fails to return, the signed offer letter by the specified date, the student's name will be removed from the final selection list. The open seat will then become available to the first student on the waiting list for that grade level.

Establishing a Charter School

2.4 The Pre-Operations Phase

With respect to students who have not been chosen to attend the charter school, the notification will indicate that the student is not eligible to attend to the charter school at this time, but that his or her name will be placed on a waiting list and he or she may become eligible to attend the charter school at a later date.

Subsequent School Years

The waiting lists for any given year cannot roll over to a subsequent year. If the capacity of the charter school is insufficient to enroll all students in any subsequent year, then a new equitable selection process must be conducted and new selection and waiting lists established.

Before each year's enrollment deadline, you must contact every parent on the list to confirm that he or she still wishes to enroll his or her child in the charter school. All prospective students will be lotteried again. The first names will fill any openings, and the rest will be placed on a new waiting list.

Hiring a Charter School Administrator

One of the most important decisions your governing board will make is that of who will lead the charter school. The person hired as administrator must build a team of staff members, clearly articulate the charter school's vision to the entire school community and persuade them of its value, and direct the school's resources in a manner that is fiscally sound and accomplishes the school's the mission. To choose an administrator wisely, all who serve on your hiring committee must understand, agree with, and support the vision and mission of the charter school.

For newly developed charter schools, the first administrator is especially important. Your governing board should be especially careful during the hiring process to be sure the successful candidate is a good match. This will help you avoid disruption of leadership during the first few years of the operation, which can be extremely detrimental to the entire charter school community, including its students.

In order to hire the best possible administrator, your governing board must carefully plan the search and interview process so each step will contribute to thorough knowledge of the candidates. First, you must write a job description that clearly states the tasks and qualities required of the administrator. When running advertisements for the position, be sure to include sufficient information about the charter school itself so potential candidates can evaluate whether they wish to apply. The job description should be fairly comprehensive, giving a sense of the scope of expectations.

Generally, little time elapses between running advertisements and receiving resumes. Next comes the enormous task of paper screening, during which you should remember that it is helpful to have several candidates to compare during the interview process. Consider the value of experience, but bear in mind that a strong candidate with less experience but a clear understanding of

Establishing a Charter School

2.4 The Pre-Operations Phase

the vision of the charter school can, with the help of a strong governing board, accomplish the task at hand.

The input of people outside the governing board can be beneficial in the hiring process. Volunteers, parents, teachers, and even students who have assisted in the charter school effort and understand the vision of the school can participate in informal interviews, providing additional perspectives on the candidates. Any questions that arise from these informal interviews should be followed up on during the reference checks just as carefully as questions that come up during the formal interview process. Bear in mind, however, that these individuals' input should be advisory only, leaving the power to hire vested with the governing board.

Interviewing Administrator Candidates

You will probably find it necessary to do some interview training with your governing board prior to paper screening, informal interviewing, formal interviewing, checking references, and visiting the candidates' current schools (when applicable).

Questions for the formal interview process should be carefully crafted to be certain that they will elicit the depth of response that is needed to make a wise selection. There is no need to limit interviews with the administrator candidates to a particular length. Indeed, it is often helpful to have more than one interview session with each candidate to obtain sufficient information and be certain of consistency in individuals' responses. Remember that interviews should also provide opportunity for candidates to ask questions of the committee.

After the initial screening and all interviews are complete, it is imperative to perform thorough reference checks for all viable candidates. Be sure to ask each listed reference person for additional contacts and do your best to contact references from each constituent group at the candidate's current school.

Bear in mind that your administrator is being hired to lead, not to be led. Although the administrator will be accountable to the governing board, the rest of the charter school's staff will work for the administrator. Therefore, your successful candidate is likely to be the type of person who wants to be a leader, not a rule-follower or manager, when it comes to important matters of school policy and structure. While your governing board needs to be clear about the qualities it hopes to find in an administrator, it should be willing to consider different personalities and styles of candidates. The hiring process requires patience and tenacity in the search for the candidate best equipped to lead your charter school.

After hiring a new administrator, you will need to make a considerable effort to transition leadership as smoothly and congenially as possible. If the new administrator is replacing a principal who has been at the charter school for some time, consideration must be made for the fact that many of the charter school community members will feel loyalty to the departing leader. To ease the

Establishing a Charter School

2.4 The Pre-Operations Phase

transition, it may be valuable to host a social function to which all members of the interview team, as well as other important charter school members, are invited. The governing board has a special role in being visible and active in its support of the new administrator during all charter school events.

School Accreditation

Before opening your doors, you will need to apply to the State Department of Education for accreditation. This is a requirement of IDAPA 08.02.02.140, which states that all public schools, both elementary and secondary, as well as districts in Idaho, shall be state accredited. Schools chartered by their local districts will complete school accreditation requirements only; schools chartered by the Public Charter School Commission are considered local education agencies (LEAs) and as such are responsible for completing both district accreditation requirements and school expectations.

Idaho state accreditation holds schools and districts accountable to rigorous standards and requires them to implement a continuous process of self-study and school improvement. Accreditation and continuous school improvement processes drive each other as Idaho's educators work toward providing an optimal learning environment.

All charter schools seeking accreditation must meet state accreditation standards approved by the State Board of Education. Charter schools and districts shall also submit annual accreditation reports to the State Department of Education as requested. The Elements of Thoroughness referenced in Section 33-1612, Idaho Code, are an integral part of the accreditation process.

A charter school that is voluntarily seeking regional accreditation through the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) will find that the NAAS standards align closely with the state standards and will be accepted by the State Department of Education in lieu of Standards I-V of the Idaho Accreditation Standards; only State Standard VI will be an additional requirement of NAAS member schools.

Many colleges require that students who attend their schools come from regionally accredited secondary educational institutions. A secondary student (grades 9-12) wishing to transfer from one school to another is assured that the new school will recognize credits already earned from a regionally accredited school.

Strategic and Improvement Planning

All LEAs, including charter school LEAs, must develop and implement a three to five year strategic plan focused on improving student achievement as a requirement of state accreditation. All schools must develop and implement a continuous school improvement plan focused on student performance as a part of both state and NAAS accreditation. The LEA and school plans must align and focus on improving school and staff capacity to increase student achievement. The NAAS school improvement processes will meet state accreditation requirements.

Establishing a Charter School

2.4 The Pre-Operations Phase

State Accreditation Standards

Standard I—Mission and Vision and Policies
Standard II—Highly Qualified Personnel
Standard III—Educational Program
Standard IV—Learning Environment
Standard V—Continuous School Improvement
Standard VI—Student Achievement

Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) Accreditation Standards

Standard I—Educational Program
Standard II—Student Personnel Services
Standard III—School Plant and Equipment
Standard IV—Library Media Program
Standard V—Records
Standard VI—School Improvement
Standard VII—Preparation of Personnel
Standard VIII—Administration
Standard IX—Teacher Load
Standard X—Student Activities
Standard XI—Business Practices

Accreditation Reports

Accreditation reports are submitted annually to the State Department of Education, and the reports are reviewed by Accreditation Advisory Committees. These members are selected by various educators and educational groups across the state and appointed by the State Department of Education. Members represent each geographic region, non-public schools, the business community, the Idaho Parent-Teacher Association, the Idaho Education Association, the Idaho School Superintendents Association, the Idaho Association of Elementary School Principals, and the Idaho Association of Secondary School Principals.

The Operations Phase: Opening the Doors, Troubleshooting, and Making Improvements

The operations phase includes actually opening the charter school and addressing any unforeseen issues while shaping the school's culture, clarifying expectations and beliefs, and beginning to use student performance data as the primary guide for charter school planning and policymaking. At this point, the work involved will be divided among the school's teachers, administrator, and board. Several common areas of focus are:

- Formally opening the doors and celebrating the commencement of the charter school
- Identifying and addressing unforeseen glitches and constraints
- Refining curriculum and instruction
- Collecting and interpreting student performance and achievement data, and using it as the foundation for ongoing planning and charter school policy development
- Evaluating the charter school administrator (see Appendix D)
- Transitioning the charter school's governance structure from the initial "start-up" stage to one of ongoing policy-making and oversight

Pupil Performance, Evaluation, and Statewide Testing

One of the most important indicators of the success of your charter school will be the data resulting from various pupil assessments. Consider that there are four possible results of your education program: In terms of achievement, individual students may start low and stay low, start high and get low, start low and get high, or start high and stay high. Obviously, the last two possibilities are desirable and the first two are not. You will want to gather as much student achievement data as possible in order to wisely adjust your program in a manner that will ensure success.

Research indicates that the most successful charter school programs are those that maintain a clear, consistent educational model. Therefore, you should be alert to deficiencies in your program but cautious about making frequent adjustments to your educational model as a whole. Gather baseline data and watch how it changes over time, then carefully consider the best direction for improvement.

Pupil Performance Assessment

Student learning is the major focus and ultimate objective of the charter school effort. To confirm that learning has occurred, there must be proper processes in place to evaluate growth. Your governing board is responsible for selecting the methods used to measure progress toward the charter school's goals and objectives. Ideally this evaluation process will include external assessments as well as internal, more subjective types of evaluation.

Charter schools have an excellent opportunity to experiment with assessment methods, including the development of new ones. You may want to select or create additional assessment tools to evaluate the success of your charter

Establishing a Charter School

2.5 The Operations Phase

school's mission and reflect its philosophy. For instance, Outward Bound schools may wish to apply assessments aligned specifically with Outward Bound curriculum.

Assessments developed in-house should be evaluated for consistency among the evaluators. They should also be correlated with standardized and other external tests. Given that grade assessments have a subjective component, resulting in an "A" from one school being a "C" or "D" at another, additional measures are desirable. Regardless of the specific assessment methods chosen, charter schools must ensure that student performance falls within an acceptable performance range.

Longitudinal data is particularly useful for evaluating a school's effect on its students over time. Charter schools, in particular, should be aware that philanthropists wishing to benefit the school often wish to see longitudinal data.

Required Assessments

By virtue of their long history and focus on skill acquisition, standardized tests provide a constant to use for comparison along with other assessment methods. Many people, regardless of their political or social orientation, respect standardized tests because they are a reasonably good measure of basic skill acquisition and are comparable nationally.

IDAPA 08.02.03.111, Rules Governing Thoroughness, requires state assessments in selected grades. All students in Idaho's public schools, grades kindergarten through twelve, must participate in the comprehensive assessment program approved by the State Board of Education. Non-public school students at those same grade levels are encouraged to participate at non-public school expense. Public charter school governing boards should be prepared for each of these assessments in addition to whatever other forms of student evaluations are chosen. Following is a discussion of required testing in Idaho:

Tests in the Statewide Testing Program

Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI)

Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)

Idaho Direct Math Assessment (DMA)

Idaho Direct Writing Assessment (DWA)

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Students Given the Tests

All public school students must participate in the statewide assessment program, including those who are eligible for special education. Each special education student's individualized education program (IEP) team shall determine whether the student will participate in the regular assessment without accommodations, the regular assessment with accommodations or adaptations, or whether the student qualifies for and will participate in the alternate assessment.

Establishing a Charter School

2.5 The Operations Phase

When the Tests are Administered

Annual testing windows are announced by State Department of Education and the Office of the State Board of Education each school year.

Idaho Reading Indicator – IRI

This is a 10-minute assessment of early reading skills. Grades K-3: administered in the first month (September), the fifth month (January), and ninth month (April 15 – May 15).

Idaho Standards Achievement Tests – ISAT

Students take the multiple-choice ISAT via computer. It is not timed, but generally takes about an hour per subject to complete. Grades 2-10: Reading, Language Usage, Math administered in the fall and spring. Grades 5, 7, and 10: Science administered in the spring.

Direct Mathematics Assessment – DMA

The DMA is a performance assessment that requires students to show their work. Grades 4, 6 and 8: administered the Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

Direct Writing Assessment – DWA

The DWA is a performance assessment that requires students to show their work. Grades 5, 7 and 9: administered the Wednesday after Thanksgiving.

National Assessment of Educational Progress – NAEP

All public schools, including charter schools, participate in this test if randomly selected. The tests are in reading, mathematics, science, and writing. Reading and math are every other year; science and writing are every four years, staggered. Grades 4, 8 and 12: administered the last week in January through the first week in March.

Payment for Testing

The U.S. Department of Education pays for NAEP materials, administration, and reporting. Costs for the following testing activities will be paid by the state:

- All consumable and non-consumable materials needed to conduct the prescribed statewide comprehensive assessment program;
- Statewide distribution of all assessment materials
- Processing and scoring student response forms, distribution of prescribed reports for the statewide comprehensive assessment program
- Implementation, processing, scoring and distribution of prescribed reports for the Direct Writing Assessment and the Direct Mathematics Assessment

Costs for any additional administrations or scoring services not included in the prescribed statewide comprehensive assessment program will be paid by the participating school districts.

The comprehensive assessment program should be scheduled so that a minimum of instructional time is invested. Student time spent in testing will not be charged against attendance requirements.

Establishing a Charter School

2.5 The Operations Phase

Virtual Schools

Virtual schools face a number of special challenges when it comes to administering standardized tests, as students may be located all over the state. Many virtual schools have arranged for the use of inexpensive facilities, such as community centers and libraries, where students within each region may gather to take proctored exams.

Reporting

Public charter schools report to their authorized chartering entities annually, as the authorizers are responsible for the general oversight of the schools they have approved. These reports include, but are not limited to, financial and programmatic audits, as well as student progress on measurable education standards described in the approved charters.

Annual Programmatic Audit

Sections 33-5205(3)(k) and 33-5206(7), Idaho Code, require charter schools to complete yearly programmatic audits for submission to their authorizer. These programmatic audits should be completed by an outside entity with knowledge of charter schools and their missions, goals, and requirements. The entity conducting the audit may be a single person or a group of peers. Many charter schools choose to have their audits performed by the Idaho Charter School Network. Auditors usually establish a format for the audit that is used year after year, so the charter school is being audited in a systematic manner and the results provide a basis for comparison.

Your programmatic audit should contain information as outlined in Section 33-5205(3)b, Idaho Code, including students' ISAT scores, individual student growth indicators to demonstrate whether pupils have attained the skills and knowledge specified as goals in your education program, and student attendance. It should also include school-wide information such as progress on established goals, goal identification for the upcoming school year, and continuous school improvement. The audit is also an opportune time to reassess the quality of your charter school's curriculum and delivery model, as well as adopted policies. Finally, the programmatic audit should address board governance, administration, stakeholder involvement, and parent and community support.

Annual Financial Audit

Sections 33-5205(3)(k) and 33-5206(7), Idaho Code, require charter schools to complete yearly financial audits and submit them to their authorizer. An experienced Certified Public Accountant should conduct your financial audit and prepare the report. Because school audits are labor intensive and federal and state school financing is difficult to understand, it is important that an experienced accountant be hired to conduct the audit. Because government audits are different from normal corporate audits, you should consult a professional who is well-versed in government accounting standards.

Establishing a Charter School

2.5 The Operations Phase

In addition to the annual financial audit, schools that receive federal funds must provide an annual report to the State Department of Education.

Verbal Reports to the Authorizer

Some authorizers require a verbal presentation of the programmatic and financial audits, which may include any findings and a discussion of what the charter school is doing to correct them. Other authorizers require only that a copy of the audits be submitted for their review.

The Public Charter School Commission performs annual oversight visits to the schools it authorizes. Each visit is followed by a verbal report from the school to the Commission at the next regular Commission meeting. The checklist used at these oversight visits is included in Appendix D.

Amending the Charter

A public charter school may petition to amend its charter at any time. The authorized chartering entity's review of the amendments will be limited in scope solely to the proposed amendments. In other words, if you submit amendments to your charter, your authorizer can only review those proposed amendments. The authorizer may not review other parts to the petition at that time.

While an authorizer may ask a charter school's governing board to amend its charter, the board is not required to do so. However, it is advisable for the governing board to carefully consider the request. If the amendments are minor in nature and would not compromise the mission or vision of the charter school, it is probably in the best interest of the charter school to maintain a good working relationship with its authorizer by making the proposed amendments.

Proposed charter amendments should be submitted in legislative format (strike out any text that is being removed and underline any text that is being added). This will allow your authorizer's staff and authorizer to quickly determine what amendments are being proposed.

A proposed amendment must go through the same process as does a new petition. As with a new petition, it is wise for the governing board of a charter school to work with its authorizer's staff on any amendments prior to formal submission. Also, prior to submission to the authorized chartering entity, proposed amendments must first be submitted to the State Department of Education for completion of a Sufficiency Review. A copy of the Sufficiency Review must be submitted to the authorizer, along with the proposed amendments to the charter.

The charter school's governing board will need to make a formal presentation of the proposed amendments to the authorizer at one, or possibly two, open meetings. The authorizer will then make a final decision as to whether to accept or deny the proposed amendments.

Establishing a Charter School

2.5 The Operations Phase

If the proposed amendments are denied, the governing board of the charter school may appeal directly to the State Board of Education.

Notices of Defect

Once your petition is approved, you are responsible to meet the terms of your charter, comply with all general education laws of the state unless specifically directed otherwise in Idaho Code 33-5201 et seq., and operate in accordance with state educational standards of thoroughness as defined in Section 33-1612, Idaho Code and IDAPA 08.02.04.301. If your authorizer has reason to believe you have failed to do so, the authorizer is statutorily required to take action.

Should your authorizer have reason to believe your charter school has committed any defect identified in Section 33-5209(2)(a)(e), Idaho Code, the authorizer must provide you with prompt written notice of the defect and provide reasonable opportunity to cure the defect.

If you receive a written notice of defect, you must provide your authorizer with a corrective action plan describing your plan to cure the defect. This corrective action plan must describe, in detail, the terms and conditions by which your charter school will cure the defect, including a reasonable time frame for completion. You must submit a copy of the corrective action plan to the State Board of Education, as well as to your authorizer.

If your authorizer reasonably determines that the continued operation of the public charter school presents an imminent public safety issue, this process may be bypassed and your charter revoked immediately.

The Revocation Process

Unlike traditional public schools, charter schools may have their charters revoked, effectively shutting down the school for failure to cure a defect with respect to the operation of the public charter school.

If a charter school fails to cure a defect after receiving reasonable notice and opportunity to cure the defect, the school's authorizer must provide the school with written notice of intent to revoke the charter. This notice must provide the school with a reasonable opportunity to reply, defined in IDAPA 08.02.04.303 as at least 30 days.

Within 30 days of the charter school's written reply, the authorizer must conduct a public hearing, to be conducted by the authorizer or its appointee, with respect to its intent to revoke the charter. Should the school fail to reply by the date set in the notice of intent to revoke, a hearing will be held no later than 60 days after the date the notice was sent by the authorizer. Notice of the hearing will be sent to the charter school at least 10 days in advance of the hearing.

If the authorizer determines that the public charter school has not complied with its corrective action plan and cured the defect at issue, the authorizer may revoke the charter. This decision may be appealed to the State Board of

Establishing a Charter School

2.5 The Operations Phase

education as described in IDAPA 08.02.04.203. Should the State Board of Education reverse a decision of revocation, the Public Charter School Commission will become the authorized chartering entity for the charter school.

Nationally, only a small percentage of charter revocations occur solely due to unsatisfactory academic performance. The vast majority of revocations are the result of financial or other reasons. Conscientious financial management and governance, combined with open communication between you and your authorizer, can go a long way toward safeguarding you from the possibility of revocation.

Charter School Governance

Charter schools in Idaho are non-profit corporations governed by boards of directors. The board members are public agents authorized by their authorized chartering entity to guide the policies and operations of their charter school. As you move through the four development phases covered in Section 2 of this manual, you will learn the importance of developing a governing board diverse in skills but united in vision. This section will discuss various aspects of the formation and function of a governing board and its bylaws.

Governance Development

During the Pre-Operations and particularly the Operations phases of charter school development, a transition will take place in the leadership of the charter school effort: the school's founders and/or their successors will transform into a formal governing board.

The governance structure of your particular charter school should be defined in your petition. This structure generally takes the form of a parent, parent/teacher, or parent/teacher/community board consisting of five to nine members. The charter school's administrator is often included as a nonvoting member.

Except in the direst of circumstances, the board should act as a governing board rather than a managing board. However, it is likely that in the early days of operation, the division of governance and management will be rather cloudy due to the enormity of the task of opening a charter school. As time passes, you must make a continual and conscious effort to divide tasks so your board becomes the policy making body while your administrator manages the day-to-day operations of the charter school. Lack of understanding of the difference between governance and management leads to lack of focus, which results in dampened morale and burnout among well-intentioned people.

Board responsibilities include setting policies, determining curriculum, overseeing the budget, evaluating the administrator, and determining how staff will be evaluated. Because charter schools are required to organize as 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, some of the board's activities will be dictated by law. Time spent studying bylaws, developing job descriptions, and discussing necessary policies for the charter school will help a fledgling board understand its role.

Selecting Initial Board Members

Your charter school founders must write bylaws to define the number of members on your governing board, their terms of office, and the process by which they will be elected. Terms for board members should be staggered so less than half of the board seats change at any one time. Newly formed charter schools may want to consider having the original board serve longer terms,

Charter School Governance

3.1 Charter School Governance

beginning the election process during the second or third year. Continuity is critical during startup due to the benefit of wisdom gained during discussions about vision and mission, the application process, and petition negotiations.

It is tempting to select as governing board members the people who fought your political battle, typed your petition, held informational meetings, and developed your budget. At this point, however, the job focus and necessary skill sets shift, requiring different talents and areas of knowledge.

Good governing board members are those who understand the charter school's vision and mission. They understand the larger setting within which the charter school exists and have a good knowledge of state and federal education laws, regulations, and rules as they apply to charter schools, and they can make accommodations for changes. They understand the political environment in their local district and have a good sense of the community of parents who comprise the charter school.

A number of criteria should be applied to candidates who volunteer to serve on the initial, as well as subsequent, governing boards. Search for individuals who:

- Understand and support the vision and mission of the charter school
- See the big picture regarding the charter school and translate that picture into effective policies
- Consider alternatives and concerns before making a decision
- Can make a decision and stand by it
- Work well with a group and accept majority decisions
- See through details to the essential issues at hand
- Understand the role of a governing board and how it differs from management
- Prepare for and regularly attend meetings
- Can make decisions for the charter school without focusing on the special needs of their own children

After working together for several months, your founding group should be quite familiar with its members' strengths and weaknesses. It bears repeating that the governing board must be composed of people who see the big picture, understand the vision and mission of the charter school perfectly, and can be trusted as guardians of the charter school's vision. The board is charged with finding the essential ideas in details, thoroughly investigating problems in search of the best, most workable solutions, and devoting the time necessary to see the charter school established.

Significant representation from the founding group should be included on the first governing board to interpret the charter. However, founding committee members must be honest with themselves and try to balance a variety of skills and vocations on the board, avoiding too heavy representation from any one

Charter School Governance

3.1 Charter School Governance

group – attorneys, accountants, homemakers, former teachers, or business owners. The complex process of putting together a charter school requires people with so many different strengths that there will be no lack of appropriate opportunity for involvement in the charter school's development. Governing board service is merely one of these opportunities.

Preparing Future Board Members

In order for a charter school's vision to outlive the active involvement of its founders and original governing board, the vision must be passed to others within the charter school community who can guard the vision and groom prospective governing board members. Indeed, one of the most important roles of the governing board is grooming future board members. *Ad hoc* advisory committees to the governing board (textbook committees, curriculum committees, fund raising committees, hiring committees, and accountability committees) serve as an excellent training ground. Governing board members serving on these committees need to be alert to people exhibiting the desired qualities for members of the governing board.

When good prospective members for the governing board are identified, it is the responsibility of the current governing board to assure that opportunity is available for these people to continuously increase their understanding of the charter school vision and mission and to expand their responsibility in upholding it. In addition, as leadership opportunities within the committees become available, such people should be asked to fill the roles. Bear in mind that you should constantly be searching for future board members who can fill the knowledge and expertise gaps in your current board.

The governing board has the responsibility to ensure that the charter school community does not forget the school's vision and culture. Parent education offers important opportunities to keep the vision fresh while continuing to develop people who can step into governing board roles. Informal discussion groups focusing on the charter school's vision and mission, perhaps supplemented by readings, can provide some policy minded people the opportunity to learn more about the charter school. Newsletters to parents should always bear the charter school message, history, and vision, as well. However, nothing can identify quality candidates better than an alert observer of other persons acting and thinking within a committee. Observant administrators can often identify prospective governing board members as they interact with members of the charter school community.

A sample survey for prospective board members is included in Appendix D.

Policy Development

Even before a charter petition is submitted for review, some essential policies must be in place. The governing board must set policies regarding how it will:

Charter School Governance

3.1 Charter School Governance

- Make decisions and set future policies
- Hire its administrator
- Select specific curriculum
- Select and manage personnel
- Establish expectations for student performance
- Ensure consistency in tracking measurable data
- Define student responsibilities
- Specify use of facilities
- Establish financial goals
- Select support services

These early policies form the framework to which other policies may be added as necessary. While it is unwise to write policies for the mere purpose of adding to the policy manual, no board should function in an environment of “unwritten policies.” An unwritten policy has little binding authority.

Written policies provide continuity and stability for a charter school. They serve also as a mechanism for shaping the charter school’s identity, effectively using the resident expertise, and gaining support for the charter school’s mission and educational vision. They serve as a check to anyone hoping to advance an agenda contrary to the mission of the charter school. Policies also help clarify roles and responsibilities within a charter school by drawing clear lines between governance and management. In so doing, they clarify lines of accountability and provide a basis for evaluation.

Although policies can be created from scratch, sample policies may be modified to fit the specific needs of an individual charter school. During policymaking discussions, governing board members should question and play “devil’s advocate” as they create policies. New policies should be carefully read, studied, and modified as necessary before adoption. Allow at least two board meetings for consideration of a policy before adopting it.

Over time, it will become necessary to review adopted policies for consistency with other adopted policies. It is wise to have a procedure in place that defines the policy review process.

Meetings

Because charter schools are public entities, their governing boards must comply with Open Meeting Law. All board members should be familiar with Sections 67-2340 through 67-2347, Idaho Code. An Idaho Open Meeting Law Manual is available online at <http://www.scc.state.id.us>.

Agendas with all necessary background materials should be prepared and distributed to board members prior to meetings. Board members or charter school constituents proposing agenda items should give the requests, including

Charter School Governance

3.1 Charter School Governance

all background materials, to the governing board chairman or secretary well in advance of the meeting.

Board members should arrive at meetings on time and be prepared to discuss all items on the agenda. Regular attendance is essential, and absences should occur only rarely. A policy should be developed to cover attendance at board meetings and make provision for proxy voting, and your bylaws should address removal of board members for excessive absences. Meetings should begin on time and include the following agenda items:

- Agenda Approval – the time to add or remove items from the agenda, including moving items from the consent agenda for further discussion.
- Approval and/or amendment of previous minutes.
- Correspondence – includes discussion of any written or phone communication with the board or any of its members. This is a good time to schedule any public comments.
- Director/Principal/Administrator report.
- Consent Agenda – the time to approve any items that have appeared on previous meeting agendas and are in their final form. The consent agenda may also include items that are non-controversial in nature and will likely cause little, if any, debate among the board members. Should debate arise on an item, the item should be moved to the regular agenda.
- Agenda Items (prioritized).

All governing board meetings, except for executive sessions (allowed for discussion of personnel issues and other items as provided by Section 67-2345, Idaho Code) must be open to the public. Notice of the meetings must be given to the public in advance of each meeting. Written minutes must be taken of all meetings, and these minutes must be made available to the public within a reasonable period of time after the meeting. Board members need to understand that information regarding individual students cannot be discussed in open meetings. However, in the rare instance that the governing board must deal with individual student information, discussions of this nature may occur in executive session.

Governing boards should take care to avoid conflicts of interest. For instance, no board member should vote on issues from which he or she might financially benefit. A clear policy regarding conflict of interest situations should be established as soon as possible.

Governing Board Annual Evaluations

To assure continued effectiveness, governing boards should conduct annual evaluations of their own performance and meeting effectiveness. In addition, the charter school's administrator should evaluate the board's performance on an annual basis. Remember to use measurable, objective criteria.

Charter School Governance

3.1 Charter School Governance

Boards should review their own performance by responding to questions such as these:

- Are the board and its committees sufficiently knowledgeable concerning issues that impact the charter school so that they do not depend excessively on guidance from the administrator or other staff?
- Does the board have an established procedure for setting and approving policies, a fully updated policy book, and a regular policy review process?
- Has the board ensured that its public relations efforts are in the hands of a competent person who will accurately convey the charter school's message to its own community and the broader public?
- Has the board done an adequate job of forming committees to do the work of the charter school as needed? Are the board members involved in these committees?
- Has the board completed an annual charter school performance review? How does the school's performance compare with its vision and stated goals?
- Has the board conducted an annual administrator performance review?
- Are complete and accurate board meeting minutes kept and made available to the public?
- Do the bylaws allow for regular rotation of board memberships?
- Does the board actively recruit members from the charter school community to participate on committees with board members?

Additional information on creating effective governing boards is included in Appendix D.

The Business of Operating a Charter School

In many ways, operating a charter school is similar to running a business. For example, you will need to incorporate, establish governance, budget wisely, understand how your funding will flow, purchase or build an appropriate facility, and hire personnel and provide them with benefits. This section will address many of these details.

Organizing as a Nonprofit Corporation

Pursuant to Section 33-5204, Idaho Code, charter schools must be organized and managed under the Idaho Nonprofit Corporation Act, Title 30, Chapter 3, Idaho Code.

To form a nonprofit corporation, Articles of Incorporation must be filed in the Secretary of State's office. Forms for nonprofit Articles of Incorporation and other information regarding nonprofit corporations can be found online at the Idaho Secretary of State Business Entities website, <http://www.idsos.state.id.us/corp/corindex.htm>.

Your Articles of Incorporation will include, among other things, the name of your corporation, the corporation's address, identification of a "registered agent" (a person who agrees to receive legal papers on behalf of the corporation), and the names and addresses of the initial directors. If your governing board also intends to apply for IRS federal tax exemption as a charitable organization, your Articles of Incorporation must contain a required purpose clause and dissolution of assets provision. Valuable information on 501(c)(3) qualifications, including sample Articles of Incorporation, is available on the IRS website, www.irs.gov.

After incorporating, your board of directors will complete the organization of the nonprofit corporation by appointing officers and adopting bylaws.

Exemptions from Paying Sales Tax

Nonprofit incorporation and tax exemption involve complex legal and taxation issues. To ensure compliance with state and federal law, charter schools should consult an experienced attorney and/or tax expert. These professionals can oversee the entire process and ensure that the organization meets all relevant statutory requirements. Many business lawyers specialize in nonprofit assistance and have the needed expertise to meet a nonprofit corporation's needs.

Federal 501(c)(3) Exemption

Obtaining tax-exempt status under 501(c)(3) can benefit a charter school in several ways. For example, if a charter school obtains tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, not only is it free from paying taxes on all income from activities related to its nonprofit purpose, but people and organizations that donate to the charter school can take a tax deduction for their contributions. To apply, submit a federal 501(c)(3) tax exemption application to the IRS with a copy of your filed nonprofit Articles of Incorporation.

Every organization recognized as tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code may be required to file an annual information return: Form 990, Form 990-EZ or Form 990-PF along with Schedules A and B.

State Tax Exemption

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.2 Organizing as a Nonprofit Corporation

Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code are also exempt from paying state income tax. In addition, pursuant to Section 33-5204(1) Idaho Code, sales to or purchases made by a public charter school are exempt from payment of the state sales and use tax. To claim their exemption, the charter school must give its vendor a completed form ST-101, Sales Tax Resale or Exemption Certificate. Once this form is on file with the vendor, it covers all the charter school's exempt purchases.

Budgets and Financial Management

The financial autonomy of a charter school depends on whether it is authorized by a local school district or the Public Charter School Commission (Commission). Charter schools authorized by their local school districts become part of the districts' Local Education Agencies (LEAs). For these charters, federal funding is sent to the local school district, then routed to the charter school. Virtual charter schools and all charter schools authorized by the Commission are independent LEAs, and as such receive federal funding directly. State funds flow directly to all individual charter schools, just as they do to all traditional public schools.

Charter schools have the same fiscal responsibility and autonomy as other LEAs. All charter schools, regardless of status, must develop sound financial management practices in order to address a full range of fiscal management issues. Since proper accounting for the use of private, state, and federal funds is critical for the maintenance of continued support for a charter school, the budget plan your charter school develops must ensure proper use of public funds, reflect your school's purpose and philosophy, and stand up to a financial audit.

Below is some general guidance regarding charter school budgets and financial management. Bear in mind that this information should not be viewed as a substitute for qualified financial counsel.

Preparing Budgets

A sound, comprehensive, and reasonable budget is critically important to the success of your charter school. Founders must research and clearly establish the funds that will be available, then develop a comprehensive plan for funds allocation.

When preparing your budget, it is wise to research what monies are available beyond the state allocation, such as technology or transportation funds. Title 1 (financial assistance to schools with high poverty populations) may also be available. More information on funding sources is included later in this section.

Out of these monies, the following expenses must be paid:

- Building rent or purchase of property
- Renovations to the property
- Utilities
- Personnel (administration, faculty, and staff) salaries and benefits
- Curriculum (textbooks, manipulatives, lab equipment, etc.)
- Office costs (including cost of annual audit)
- Special Education costs (extra revenue should accompany each identified child)
- Negotiated services (personnel services, insurance, etc.)
- Furniture, equipment, and computers
- Transportation

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.3 Budgets and Financial Management

- Food service
- Miscellaneous costs that don't fall into a specific category
- Contingency

Your budget, including revenue and expenses, should project three to five years out. All startup costs must be included in the first year's budget. If you apply for grants, it is recommended that you use grant money to cover *non-operating* costs such as startup expenses, extra programs that if no longer funded will not affect the integrity of the charter school or its educational program, or capital items such as computers. When creating a budget, you must be certain that operating costs are not greater than expected revenues.

Funding will be dependent upon actual student enrollment. You would be wise to underestimate the number of students to be enrolled by 5% to avoid the possibility of an immediate fiscal deficiency. Remember that charter schools may not charge tuition; however, student fees may be assessed in an equitable format for expendable goods such as art supplies, chemicals, and sports. Care should be taken not to make costs prohibitive for families.

In order to ensure good cash flow, you should be aware that Section 33-1009, Idaho Code, states that the general account appropriation will be distributed in five payments to be made not later than the fifteenth day of August, the first day of October, the fifteenth day of November, the fifteenth day of February, and the fifteenth day of May each year. Each payment shall be approximately 20% of the total general account appropriation for the fiscal year. Payments of monies that accrue to the public school income fund, other than the state general account appropriation, shall be made each year on the fifteenth day of November, February, May, and July.

Budget decisions are woven into all facets of charter school planning. For example, in order to provide for future teacher raises, costs should be projected carefully. Teachers should be hired with varying degrees of experience to ensure a manageable pay structure with room for growth, thus freeing up money during subsequent years to increase salaries as appropriate. Imagine where the charter school should be in five years or ten years. Then design your budget to help you get there.

Your budget should include such costs as employee benefits, which encompass statutorily mandated programs such as the Public Employee Retirement System (PERSI). Make certain that all essentials, including liability insurance and other necessary services, are accounted for as well. While these figures do not have to be exact, they should be as close as possible to the actual costs you will incur as you open, outfit, house, and operate your charter school.

A well-developed charter school budget not only lists projected revenues and expenditures, but also reflects the mission, vision, and design principles of a charter school. Working within financial constraints, innovative charter school developers create budgets that make the most of limited funds.

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.3 Budgets and Financial Management

A sound fiscal plan should include all of the following:

- Start-up cash flow budget
- Cash flow projection
- Longer-term (3-5 year) balanced operating budget
- Budget-versus-actual monthly report
- Balance sheet summary of assets and debts
- Statement about assumptions (such as enrollment projections and teacher salaries) underlying fiscal statements
- Description of budget development and oversight process

The fiscal management standards and practices used by charter schools vary widely. While a charter school may determine its own processes and hire its own independent auditor, it must submit a yearly audit report conducted by an independent auditor. Charter schools receiving large amounts of federal funds may also need to comply with various federal standards regarding accounting and auditing. Charter developers who manage their own funds need to understand the accounting and audit procedures and laws applicable to them in order to establish a workable system to account for their funds.

A sample charter school budget is included in with the sample petition in Appendix B.

Funding for Charter Schools

One of the biggest questions petitioners and the public share about charter schools is that of how they are funded. As public schools, charter schools receive federal and state funding, but they do not benefit from local property taxes and cannot raise money through bonds. Following is a discussion of the funding sources available to Idaho's public charter schools.

State Funding

State funding for charters schools is based on support units and is calculated according to the schedules found in Section 33-1002(6), Idaho Code. These schedules include attendance divisors for kindergarten, elementary, secondary, exceptional, and alternative secondary students. For each of the above categories of students, the attendance divisor is divided into the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) to determine the number of support units. Minimum support units are listed for each range of average daily attendance. If the minimum support units are greater than the calculated support units, the minimum support units will be used. The support units for each student category will be totaled and rounded to the nearest tenth. The resulting total support units will be multiplied by the state distribution factor.

Funding from the state educational support program will be equal to the total distribution factor plus the salary-based apportionment provided in Chapter 10, Title 33, Idaho Code. For each support unit, charter schools will receive 1.1 instructional staff allowance, .075 administrative staff allowance, and .375 classified staff allowance. The resulting staff allowances will be multiplied by the base salaries identified in Section 33-1004E, Idaho Code and the respective average educational and experience index as calculated per Section 33-1004A, Idaho Code.

Distribution of Funds

Charter schools will receive the same funding as traditional schools except that charter schools will be exempt from the following:

- Section 33-1003B, Idaho Code, relating to guaranteed minimum support:

Charter schools are exempt from guaranteed minimum support that allows a school district to receive 90% of the previous year's state educational dollars, less the special program allocations in Sections 33-1002, 33-1007A (Feasibility study and plan for school closures and/or school district consolidation), and 33-2006 (Education of certain expectant or delivered mothers), Idaho Code.

- That portion of Section 33-1004, Idaho Code, relating to reduction of the instructional staff allowance when there is a discrepancy between the number allowed and the number actually employed:

If a school district does not employ the number of instructional staff allowed, the instructional staff allowance shall be reduced to the

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.4 Funding for Charter Schools

actual number employed. This is commonly referred to as “use it or lose it.” Charter schools are exempt from this requirement for instructional staff. Note that the “use it or lose it” requirement applies to both traditional and charter schools when determining administrative staff.

- Section 33-1004E, Idaho Code, for calculation of district staff indices:

The exemption from Section 33-1004E, Idaho Code, for calculation of district staff indices, simply means that the charter school staff will be placed on the experience and education index in Section 33-1004A, Idaho Code, thus generating charter school indices. These indices will be used in calculating the salary-based apportionment.

Advance Payment

Section 33-5208(5), Idaho Code allows that a charter school may receive in advance a payment of 25% of its estimated annual apportionment for its first year of operation. This payment is designed to assist the charter school with initial start-up costs on payroll obligations. The advance payment continues to be available each year thereafter, provided the charter school has an increase of student population of twenty students or more. The charter school must submit its anticipated fall enrollment for each grade level to the State Department of Education (SDE), Bureau of Support Services by June 1.

The SDE shall determine an estimated annual apportionment from which the amount of the advance payment shall be calculated. Advance payment shall be made to the charter school between July 1 and July 31. All subsequent payments, taking into account the one-time advance payment made for the first year of operation, shall be made to the charter school in the same manner as other public schools in accordance with the provisions of Section 33-1009, Idaho Code.

Payment Schedule

Section 33-1009, Idaho Code, states that the general account appropriation will be distributed in five payments to be made not later than the fifteenth day of August, the first day of October, the fifteenth day of November, the fifteenth day of February, and the fifteenth day of May each year.

Each payment shall be approximately 20% of the total general account appropriation for the fiscal year. Payments of monies other than the state general account appropriation that accrue to the public school income fund shall be made each year on the fifteenth day of November, February, May, and July.

Federal Funding (Title I, Part A)

Title IA provides financial assistance to schools in an effort to improve the teaching and learning of children in high-poverty schools to enable those children to meet, at minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and assessments. By providing funding for the

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.4 Funding for Charter Schools

education of at-risk children in high-poverty schools, the title supports the goals of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 through No Child Left Behind with a focus on school-wide reform efforts, parent involvement, professional development, and standards, and assessments. The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equitable, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. Title IA provides the largest source of federal educational funding support for students in public and private schools and is intended to provide for supplemental services beyond the schools' basic programs.

In brief, Title IA:

- Supports school districts in providing high-quality opportunities for students in high poverty schools to meet the same challenging state content and performance standards
- Promotes extending learning time in accelerated rather than remedial classes
- Expands eligibility for schools to operate school wide programs that serve children in high poverty schools (above 40% free and reduced lunch)
- Supports achievement of effective transitions: preschool to school, and school to work
- Establishes accountability based on results, drawing data from the statewide assessments and local measures while reducing duplicate testing
- Increases effective parental participation
- Assures fair and equitable participation of private school students
- Supports coordination with health and social services

Eligibility Requirements for Title I Funds

A public charter school must meet the same eligibility requirements for Title I as any other public school or LEA. The LEA must first determine which schools (including charter schools) are eligible to participate. Generally, a school is eligible if the percentage of children from low-income families residing in its attendance area or enrolled in the school is at least as high as the percentage of children from low-income families in the LEA as a whole, or is at least 35%.

The requirements include developing an approved Consolidated Plan and developing and implementing a building level plan that details the program of Title I instructional support including but not limited to a Parent Involvement Policy, Parent Compacts, participation in the state assessment and accountability system, highly qualified staff, and a scientific research based program of support for academically at risk students.

Applying For Title I Funds

Public charter schools requesting federal funds as an LEA should notify the Idaho Department of Education's Bureau of Special Populations in writing as soon as possible in order to begin the process of applying for federal Title I funds. Working with a member of the State Department Team as soon as possible to collect the required information and to develop these plans will

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.4 Funding for Charter Schools

assure that eligible charter schools applying for federal funds as an LEA and charter school LEAs receive federal funds in a timely manner.

Distribution of Title I Funds

An LEA ranks all of its schools according to their percentages of poverty to allocate funds. The LEA must first serve all schools above 75% poverty, then serve eligible schools with lower poverty rates.

Flexibility in Obtaining Poverty Data

An LEA collects enrollment and poverty data to determine schools' eligibility for Title I funds. If a charter school is not open at the time data is collected, it can be collected at a later date.

For charter school children, the LEA may use poverty data from a different source than the data it uses for other public schools, as long as the income level for both sources is generally the same. Idaho provides an Income Verification form to assist charter schools in determining their percentage students in poverty.

Districts are encouraged to allow charter schools as much leeway as possible with respect to deadlines for submitting data. However, because of districts' need to determine the allocation of Title I funds among participating schools in sufficient time to design programs, hire staff, purchase necessary equipment and materials, and consult with charter schools officials about equitable services for their children, districts may establish a reasonable reporting date for charter schools. Districts are strongly encouraged to adopt one of the following options:

- The district may reserve an amount off the top of its Title I allocation that it believes will be sufficient to fund eligible charter schools. Once a charter school has the appropriate data, the district will determine eligibility and ranking. The district will then allocate the appropriate amount of reserved Title I funds to the qualifying charter school in accordance with the district's Title I allocation procedures.
- The district may distribute an appropriate amount available from Title I "carryover funds" to a qualifying charter school.
- The district may apply to the State Department of Education (SDE) for funds available through the Title I "reallocation" process to serve a qualifying charter school.

Bear in mind that you should not rely on funds from the latter two points, as they may or may not be available to you.

Responsibility for the Development, Implementation, and Monitoring of Title I Programs

Districts (LEAs) must treat their charter schools the same as their regular public schools in determining eligibility and providing program support and guidance. Program reviews and monitoring for academic achievement through Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) must occur on a regularly scheduled basis.

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.4 Funding for Charter Schools

Eligible public charter schools may deliver support services to identified students using Targeted Assistance Models, School Wide Projects, and/or through extended time opportunities. Charter schools qualify to use a Title I School Wide Program when their poverty level is 40% or greater and must enter into a one-year planning process before actually implementing the program.

State Department of Education program reviews and technical assistance visits will occur on a regularly scheduled basis, and monitoring for academic achievement through Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) will occur annually.

Public Charter School Grant

The Public Charter School Grant is a federal grant program administered by the Idaho State Department of Education (SDE). In 2005, Idaho was awarded a three year grant to assist charter schools with their planning and implementation. This grant is broken down into three different fiscal year allocations. The SDE is authorized to retain 5% of the grant for administration and oversight of the grant program. The rest of the grant flows through to eligible charter schools.

Eligibility for Funds

Charter schools that are in their first three years of operation during the three years covered by the award period of the federal grant (2005-2008) are eligible to receive grant monies. The grant allows for approximately \$150,000 per charter school for each year of eligibility.

Application Process

Applications will be mailed to eligible charter schools. Completion of the application will include explanations of:

- The charter school's mission
- The charter school's educational program and goals
- The charter school's goals for the grant
- How the charter school will measure attainment of its goals
- How the money will be spent
- How the money will assist in the attainment of the charter school's goals

Applications are read by a grant committee made up of SDE staff and other qualified individuals with expertise and knowledge in charter schools. The applications will be graded on a rubric. An application must receive a minimum score, and the budget must follow allowable activities in order for the grant to be awarded. Charter schools will have a chance to rewrite their grant if they do not receive a passing score or there are questions regarding the submitted budget.

Use of the Grant Dollars

Any dollars received through this grant can only be used for items related to the planning and implementation of the charter school's educational program. Federal guidelines on allowable activities are as follows:

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.4 Funding for Charter Schools

1. Post-award planning and design of the educational program, which may include:
 - a) refinement of the desired educational results and of the methods for measuring progress toward achieving those results; and
 - b) professional development of teachers and other staff who will work in the charter school.
2. Initial implementation of the charter school, which may include:
 - a) informing the community about the charter school;
 - b) acquiring necessary equipment and educational materials and supplies;
 - c) acquiring or developing curriculum materials; and
 - d) other initial operational costs that cannot be met from State or local sources.

The charter school is responsible for setting this money up in a separate fund and tracking expenses separately from any other funds. The charter school must adhere to the approved budget when making purchases. If needed, the school may request an amendment to the budget from the SDE School Choice Specialist but may not change the budget until approval is given.

A performance report and full accounting of funds is required at the end of the year, together with a detailed explanation of any discrepancies between the approved budget and actual expenditures. Charter schools may be liable for paying back any funds that were expended on items that were not approved and do not meet the grant requirements.

Release of Funds

Funds are released on an as needed basis after they have been awarded. The first installments are made in the late fall. Federal regulations allow charter schools to have only enough cash on hand to cover one month's expenses, however, so lump sums are seldom paid out.

Reports are due at the beginning of every quarter. Each report must list the amounts received, amounts spent, and the amounts needed for the next quarter. If a charter school has more cash on hand at the end of a quarter than is needed to cover the next month's expenses, they must return that money to the SDE for re-disbursement at a later date.

Amount of Grant Awarded

At the time of the drafting of this manual, the current grant to Idaho is for 2005-2008. Charter schools starting after fall 2005 are not guaranteed three years of funding. There follows an explanation of the timeline. Please note that the amounts of the yearly grants may fluctuate based on award amounts from the federal government.

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.4 Funding for Charter Schools

- If a charter school opens in 2005-2006, it will receive \$150,000 in each school year (2005-2006, 2006-2007, and 2007-2008) for a total of \$450,000
- If a charter school opens in 2006-2007, the charter school will receive \$150,000 for 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 for a total of \$300,000. However, if Idaho is awarded another three year grant in 2008, the school will be eligible for one year of the new grant.
- If a charter school does not open until 2007-2008, it will receive \$150,000 for that year. However, if Idaho is awarded another three year grant in 2008, the school will be eligible for two years of the new grant.

Federal Title IV Funding (Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program)

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools (SDFS) Program is designed to help establish a positive, safe, drug-free, and violence-free learning environment in which Idaho's youth may develop to their maximum potential. To qualify for Title IV funds, a charter school must be an approved LEA. Allocation is based on 60% Title I and 40% enrollment, as well as Average Daily Attendance.

Charter schools are notified of the amount of funding they are eligible to receive by mid April. In order to receive the funding, a program application must be completed and submitted for approval. Charter schools are to notify the SFDS office if they are going to apply for the grant by May 1. The grant application is due into the SDFS office by the third week of June.

The program's goals and objectives are to:

- Prevent the use, possession, and distribution of tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs;
- Prevent violence and promote school safety; and
- Create a disciplined environment conducive to learning.
- The program is to include activities that promote the involvement of parents and coordinate with community groups and agencies.

Special Education Funding

Special education funding from the federal government flows to school districts and charter school LEAs through the State Department of Education. LEAs are required to distribute funding to charter schools in the same manner as they provide it to other, traditional public schools.

LEAs may use Medicaid funds or other public insurance benefits to partially pay for special education and related services; however, the district may not require a parent (or adult student) to sign up or enroll in Medicaid in order for the student to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

If a special needs child is covered by private insurance, an LEA may access his or her parent's private insurance only if the parent gives informed consent. Each time the LEA proposes to access private insurance, it must obtain written parental consent and inform the parent that his or her refusal to permit the district to access private insurance does not relieve the district of its

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.4 Funding for Charter Schools

responsibility to ensure that all required services are provided at no cost to the parent.

Proceeds from public and private insurance will not be treated as program income. If a public agency spends reimbursements from federal funds for services under this part, those funds will not be considered “state or local funds” for purposes of the maintenance of effort provisions.

Transportation Funding

School transportation provided by LEAs, including charter school LEAs, is a reimbursable expense funded by the state and dispersed by the State Department of Education in accordance with Section 33-1006, Idaho Code.

Transportation reimbursement payments are included in the SDE’s February, May, and July disbursements and reflect an 85% reimbursement for the previous year’s “allowable” transportation costs. It is important for you to recognize that your school’s transportation reimbursable costs may be limited to either the statewide average cost-per-rider or statewide cost-per-mile.

Not all school transportation costs are considered reimbursable. For example, the transportation must, with few exceptions, be provided in “yellow school buses” that meet or exceed Idaho minimum construction standards, as defined in the SDE’s most recent Standards for Idaho School Buses and Operations. In addition, LEAs must cover many school transportation costs from other funding sources.

Reimbursement to home-based public virtual charter schools for transportation costs is based on a criterion that differs from costs associated with traditional school transportation modes. Not all home-based public virtual charter schools are eligible for reimbursement of transportation costs, so stakeholders should carefully review Section 33-1006(7), Idaho Code, in its entirety.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Program Funding

Each spring, the State Board of Education requests the LEP Child Count from every LEA in Idaho. These counts determine the district’s allocation amount from the total state and Federal LEP allocation for the upcoming school year. The LEP Child Count requests LEAs to report the following information:

- Number of students assessed as LEP through the Idaho English Language Assessment, which is administered once per year
- Number of students identified as LEP through any assessment made during the year

Other Funding Sources

In addition to the state and federal funds to which they are entitled, charter schools may receive funding from private individuals and organizations. Working with the private and non-profit community can yield additional financial support for charter schools and lead to increased support for the charter school within the community.

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.4 Funding for Charter Schools

Some charter schools, rather than applying for cash awards, have developed other, sometimes more productive strategies for receiving support, such as building partnerships with local businesses and organizations. Most charter schools conduct large auctions every year, where donated big ticket items garner a lion's share of the auction revenues.

Other organizations that have been favorable to charter schools include:

The Walton Family Foundation

P.O. Box 2030
Bentonville, AR 72712
Phone: (479) 464-1570
Fax: (479) 464-1580

The Walton Family Foundation, Inc. was established as the culmination of the philanthropic interests of the family of Sam M. and Helen R. Walton. The Family's purpose in establishing the Foundation was to focus their philanthropic efforts to assure that their charitable giving would have the most positive impact possible.

NCLR Headquarters Office

Raul Yzaguirre Building
1126 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 785-1670
Fax: (202) 776-1792
Email: comments@nclr.org

The Raza Development Fund, Inc. (RDF) is a support corporation of the National Council of La Raza, established in 1998 as the community development lending arm of NCLR. The mission of RDF's Hope Fund is to provide flexible but high-quality loans, along with technical assistance, to entities that provide services and opportunities to low-income Latino families, a mission that is consistent with and complementary to the mission of NCLR. Since its inception, RDF has become the largest Latino Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) in the United States.

The Charter School Growth Fund

350 Interlocken Boulevard, Suite 390
Broomfield, CO 80021
Phone: (303) 217-8090
Email: info@charterschoolgrowthfund.org

The Charter School Growth Fund (CSGF) is a philanthropic venture fund founded to significantly increase the capacity of proven educational entrepreneurs to develop and grow networks of high quality charter schools. Through its activities, CSGF is enabling the national charter sector to grow

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.4 Funding for Charter Schools

more rapidly and provide a better quality of education to many more children than is possible through the grassroots growth of single charter schools.

Nationally, the Charter School Growth Fund hopes to increase the number and scale of high quality educational options through the development and expansion of charter school management and support organizations. With a pool of \$100 million, the CSGF expects to create 100,000 new, permanent seats for underserved families in high quality charter schools by the year 2015.

RBC Capital Markets

Website: www.rbcdain.com

Contact: William Wildman

Phone: (602) 381-5364

Email: William.Wildman@Rbcdain.com

RBC Capital Markets ("RBC") is one of the largest investment banking firms in the US. In the first three quarters of 2005, RBC ranked 1st nationally in number of transactions underwritten (479) and 5th in amount of transactions (\$16.1 billion). RBC has over 30 investment banking offices in California, Arizona, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Florida, Massachusetts, Ohio, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas and Wisconsin. In 2005, RBC ranked 1st nationally in the number of K-12 schools financed through the use of tax-exempt and taxable bonds. Beginning in 2000, RBC has underwritten over \$100,000 in charter school debt for over 30 schools. RBC is currently working with the Illinois Facilities Fund on a \$150,000,000 pool financing for charter schools in Illinois.

The Education Facilities Financing Center (EFFC)

Website: www.lisc.org/

Contact: Kathy Olsen

Phone: (212) 455-5621

Email: kolsen@lisc.org

The EFFC supports quality public charter schools in low-income neighborhoods. To further its mission of helping community organizations transform distressed neighborhoods into healthy ones, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) founded the EFFC in 2003 to intensify its efforts in the area of educational facilities financing. LISC's approach is three-pronged: LISC finances individual charter schools through its network of 33 local offices, supports the development of local educational facilities funds through its EFFC investments, and fosters facility finance public policy initiatives.

The Low Income Investment Fund

Website: www.liifund.org

Contact: Susan Harper

Phone: (415) 772-9094 ext. 318

Email: sharper@liifund.org

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.4 Funding for Charter Schools

The Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) is a 21-year-old, nationally recognized, nonprofit, community development financial institution (CDFI). LIIF's mission is to alleviate poverty by providing capital and technical assistance to education, childcare, affordable housing, and other community revitalization projects in low-income communities. LIIF's Education Program, launched in 1998, provides the financing necessary to increase the number and sustainability of quality learning environments for children. As of December 2005, LIIF has made 81 loans for a total of \$66 million to support approximately 25,000 students.

NCB Development Corporation

1725 Eye Street NW, Suite 600

Washington, DC 20006

Phone: (202) 336-7680

Fax: (202) 336-7804

NCB Development Corporation, an affiliate of National Cooperative Bank, is a national nonprofit that empowers America's underserved communities to progress. The corporation creates access to capital and provides expert technical assistance otherwise unavailable to low- and moderate-income communities, while maintaining financial strength. NCB Development Corporation offers innovative lending programs, technical assistance programs, and career opportunities.

The Challenge Foundation

Website: information@challengefoundation.org

Established in 1989, the Challenge Foundation is a private charitable trust dedicated to supporting model educational initiatives that make it possible for every American child to attain a high school education that produces literate, factually aware, and thinking graduates second to none in the world.

Those model educational initiatives receiving support from the Challenge Foundation shall assure that each child:

- Becomes a motivated and capable learner.
- Acquires the essential knowledge and skills needed to compete in an increasingly competitive world.
- Builds character and makes choices that will result in a better life for themselves and others.
- Has the active involvement of parents, mentors, and the community throughout the educational process.
- Benefits society rather than detracting from it.

To accomplish the Challenge Foundation's mission, the Board of Trustees and Advisory Committee has determined that the Foundation will support model charter schools. The Foundation will also support school choice and education reform projects that promote the charter school movement. Grant proposals are received only at the Foundation's request. It does not accept unsolicited proposals.

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.4 Funding for Charter Schools

Grants are limited to tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations or public institutions. The foundation does not make grants to individuals, general operating, annual fundraising campaigns, debt reduction, or endowment. It also does not support major capital projects such as building construction, land purchases, or renovations.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

PO Box 23350

Seattle, WA 98102

Phone: (206) 709-3100

Email: info@gatesfoundation.org

Grant Inquiries

Phone: (206) 709-3140

Email: info@gatesfoundation.org

Education Programs

PO Box 23350

Seattle, WA 98102

Phone: (206) 709-3607

Fax: (206) 709-3280

Email: edinfo@gatesfoundation.org

Bill and Melinda Gates believe every life has equal value. In 2000, they created the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to help reduce inequities in four primary areas. Through its Global Health program, the Foundation works to close the gap between rich and poor countries by encouraging new research and supporting healthcare organizations that reach people most in need. The Foundation's education program seeks to ensure that all students in the United States graduate from high school ready for college, work, and citizenship.

LISC National Headquarters

501 Seventh Avenue

New York, NY, 10018

Phone: (212) 455-9800

Fax: (212) 682-5929

Email: info@lisc.org

LISC helps resident-led, community-based development organizations transform distressed communities and neighborhoods into healthy ones with good places to live, do business, work, and raise families. By providing capital, technical expertise, training, and information, LISC supports the development of local leadership and the creation of affordable housing, commercial, industrial and community facilities, businesses, and jobs.

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.4 Funding for Charter Schools

The J.A. & Kathryn Albertson Foundation

P.O. Box 70002

Boise, Idaho 83707-0102

Phone: (208) 424-2600

The J.A. & Kathryn Albertson Foundation engages in programs and proactive initiatives to improve education in Idaho, K-12. Participants in our initiatives and programs are selected either through a Request for Proposal process or by invitation.

The Idaho Community Foundation

Please contact your local library, the Idaho Community Foundation at 1-800-657-5357 or 208-342-3535, or visit The Foundation Center online for more information about possible funding sources.

As a member of the local philanthropic community, the Idaho Community Foundation supports meritorious projects and organizations at the discretion of the Foundation's Board of Directors.

Charter School Facilities

Locating and financing charter school facilities is undeniably a challenge. The 2000 National Study of Charter Schools indicates that inadequate facilities are one of the three most frequently cited obstacles faced by charter school founders. (The other two are insufficient start-up costs and insufficient operating funds.) The facilities challenge is particularly daunting for start-up charter schools, as compared to existing schools that convert to charter status.

Though charter schools are public and receive state and federal funds comparable to those of traditional public schools, they do not have the ability to raise funds through taxes or bonds. Thus, they must finance their facilities out of operating revenues or fundraise to cover facilities costs. This can prove difficult because conventional lenders generally view charter schools as risky ventures. Their limited assets, contracts, and operating histories make banks hesitant to provide them with long-term mortgages or lease financing.

The majority of charter schools are start-ups, for whom securing facilities has proven most difficult. Scarce space in a district, limited funds, and difficulties associated with borrowing money to rent space have prompted many charter schools to seek creative facilities solutions. Some have made arrangements with local churches or businesses to lease building space at low prices. Others have arranged to purchase land from developers at reduced prices. Still more have rented portable classrooms and put them on temporary sites or the property where they eventually intend to build.

Following is an outline of four basic steps in the process of securing charter school facilities: (1) developing a facilities plan, (2) assessing building/site needs, (3) selecting and evaluating a site, and (4) financing the site.

Developing a Facilities Plan

The first step toward securing facilities is developing a facilities plan. A charter school's facilities plan is integral to its overall business plan, which communicates the charter school's objectives to its board, its staff, those offering funding options, and the public. Planning for charter school facilities involves taking stock of expected enrollment, staff size, revenues, and growth. Here are a few tips:

- Start the planning process early and be flexible during the first few years of operation.
- Allow 3-4 years to develop, negotiate, finance, and complete a charter school facility project.
- Draw on professional assistance from real estate agents, nonprofit developers, architects, building inspectors, general contractors, real estate financiers, and lawyers.
- If possible, hire an experienced project manager to assist with assessing needs and selecting a site.
- Start with sufficient enrollment to cover rent or debt service.
- Reserve enough physical space for several years' growth.

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.5 Charter School Facilities

- Keep occupancy costs within 25 percent of operating revenues.
- Keep the charter school's revenue-generating space (classrooms) at or above 45 percent of the charter school's total facility space.
- Partner with community agencies such as libraries, YMCA's, and recreation areas.
- Involve parents, students, staff, and the broader community to ensure the charter school is well received in its location.

Assessing Building Needs

The next step in finding a suitable facility is to take stock of the charter school's needs. Ideally, the facility will reflect and support the charter school's culture. Thus, founders may wish to take into account the following:

- Charter school vision and how the facility reflects that vision
- Expected enrollment and expected growth
- Classroom space necessary to meet educational goals
- Amount of space needed to maintain the desired student : teacher ratio
- Desired non academic spaces, e.g. dance studio, auditorium, playground, gym, library, etc.
- Technology needs, e.g. wiring for computers and internet access
- Geographic location in relation to the students who will be attending
- Transportation options for reaching the site

It is important for developers of new charter schools to be flexible, realizing that the need for space may change over time and that all facility needs don't have to be met by the first day of classes. Creative founders will consider a wide range of alternative sites and keep several options open. In many cases, charter schools can make a less-than-ideal facility suffice for the first few years.

Evaluating and Selecting a Site

The third step is to assemble a team to identify and evaluate potential sites, allowing time to gather information about the real estate market and consider both lease and purchase options. Additionally, it is crucial to become well versed in all applicable safety issues, building codes, and zoning rules. These may include regulations such as square footage requirements for each type of classroom; permissible construction materials; specifications for walkways, doors, windows, and ceiling heights; requisite work permits; necessary on-site and off-site improvements; and adequate access for people with disabilities. The basis for required plan reviews of charter school projects by the Division of Building Safety is found in Section 39-4113, Idaho Code. During this process, plans are reviewed for general compliance with current building, mechanical, energy, accessibility, elevator, electrical, and plumbing codes.

Once you have identified potential sites, you must evaluate what it will take to make them suitable for your charter school. Pay particular attention to building codes, hazardous materials, liability costs for insurance and repairs, plumbing and wiring, and site preparation. Be aware that there may be alternative approaches to meeting regulations through waivers, phase-in periods, or grandfathering. Continue to rely on professional legal, architectural, and

The Business of Operating a Charter School

4.5 Charter School Facilities

construction expertise where appropriate. Then carefully gather bids and compare costs, bearing in mind that a short timeline will raise prices.

Creative Site Options

Many charter school developers have been innovative in securing facilities, especially on limited budgets. Consider some of the following site options utilized by existing charter schools:

- Unused or underused educational space, such as that in existing public, private, and parochial schools, or local colleges/universities. A great benefit of this option is that the facility has already been made suitable for learning.
- Community facilities that can be shared on days they are not in use. Consider churches, community centers, city parks, and recreation areas.
- Public facilities such as state or locally owned vacant buildings. Be aware that vacant buildings often require a lot of renovation.
- Corporate partnerships. Some businesses have shown interest in hosting charter schools as a convenience for their employees, while others may have a philanthropic interest or be interested in forming a reciprocal relationship.
- Unconventional locations such as former storefronts, industrial parks, office buildings, or even movie theaters
- Temporary space in modular or portable classrooms

Financing Facilities

Once a suitable site is selected and negotiations are made to obtain it, financing is the last hurdle. Charter school developers need to be as flexible and creative in securing the money as they are in finding the facility. Following is a list of possible sources of facilities funding:

- Large regional and national commercial banks (might not be eager to lend to start-ups), small local banks, finance companies, or the actual seller
- University partners, management companies, government programs, or community development corporations that act as loan guarantor
- Community development financial institutions (CDFI's), which specialize in providing access to loans for nonprofits
- State per pupil operating funds
- Fundraising through a capital campaign tapping many different sources of grant funding from federal, state, and local government grants to corporate and foundation grants
- Donations from individuals
- Monies from private investors
- Modular building companies, which may offer construction management and financing to nonprofit organizations that buy their modular facilities

Nearly all public charter schools have experienced the challenges of a facilities search. As you proceed down this road, remember to ask direction from those who have gone before.

Charter School Personnel

Public charter schools employ a variety of classified and non-classified personnel similar to that at a traditional school. In addition to an administrator, you will employ teachers and office staff, as well as maintenance and other personnel. Because these employees will be considered state employees, you must be prepared to meet certain standards, including the provision of certain benefits.

General Information about Charter School Personnel

- Charter school teachers and administrators must be on written contract in a form approved by the state superintendent of public instruction, conditioned upon a valid certificate being held by such professional personnel upon commencement of duties. There are some limited certification options and a waiver for which application can be made.
- All public charter school personnel must be covered by the Public Employee Retirement System of Idaho (PERSI), Federal Social Security, Unemployment and Worker's Compensation Insurance, and Health Insurance.
- The staff of a charter school is a separate unit for purposes of collective bargaining. No local board of trustees can require any employee of the school district to be involuntarily assigned to work in a charter school.
- Certified teachers in a charter school are considered to be public school teachers. Educational experience will accrue for service in a charter school. This experience will be counted by any school district to which the teacher applies for employment following service in a charter school.
- Certificated educators must meet the same requirements as those in other public schools.
- The State Department of Education's Bureau of Certification/Professional Standards and Adult Services administer State Board rule and Idaho statute to help ensure that highly qualified teachers are in every classroom. The rules and statutes for initial certification are found throughout The Idaho Certification Manual, which may be accessed through the SDE website.
- Idaho welcomes competent, caring, and highly qualified educators to apply for certification. A complete checklist provided in the Certification Manual outlines the requirements for initial Idaho certification, including undergoing a criminal history check as required by Sections 33-130 and 33-130A, Idaho Code.
- Out-of-state applicants for Idaho certification will be issued a three-year, non-renewable interim certificate. This certificate entitles the holder to three years in which to meet Idaho certification requirements such as the technology competency requirement.
- All Idaho certificated employees are subject to the Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators as found in Appendix A of the

Additional School Services

5.1 Additional School Services

Certification Manual. Implementing the Code of Ethics is the responsibility of the Professional Standards Commission.

- To meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal legislation, the Praxis II are the approved content area assessments as a requirement for Idaho certification. Applicants for Idaho certification must meet or exceed qualifying scores on appropriate Praxis II assessments.

Certificated Personnel Support Program

Section 33-514, Idaho Code provides for adequate support for teachers who are new to a district or charter school. It is hoped that, with support, teachers will remain in the profession and continue to develop as educators. The annual contract teacher support program applies to certificated personnel eligible to receive a category 1, 2 or 3:

- Category 1: A limited, one-year contract for the ensuing school year with no further notice required for termination.
- Category 2: For certificated personnel in the first and second years of continuous employment with the same school district. If the contract is not to be continued, written notice with reasons is required to be provided to the employee no later than May 25. The employee shall not be entitled to a review by the local board of the reasons or decision.
- Category 3: For certificated personnel during the third year of continuous employment by the same school district. District procedures shall require at least one evaluation prior to the beginning of the second semester of the school year with the results becoming a matter of record in the employee's personnel file. If an employee's work is found to be unsatisfactory, the board will establish a probationary period no less than eight weeks. After the probationary period, action shall be taken by the board as to whether the employee is to be retained, immediately discharged, discharged upon termination of the current contract, or reemployed at the end of the current contract under a continued probationary status.

Social Security

The Social Security Administration's website for state and local government employers shows that there are currently about 86,000 public employers and 23 million public employees. Social Security and Medicare coverage for government employees is unique because there are special coverage provisions for public employees under the Social Security Act. It is important for you, as a public employer, to know about these provisions and how they may affect your employees.

This website, designed for state and local government employers who are responsible for withholding, reporting and paying Social Security and Medicare taxes for public employees, provides information about how public employees are covered for Social Security and Medicare, laws and regulations, publications, contacts in your State, and related web links that will help you

Additional School Services

5.1 Additional School Services

understand the Social Security and Medicare coverage and reporting requirements for public employees.

Federal and State Tax Withholding

All charter schools are required to withhold federal and state income tax for their employees. Charter schools must verify that each new employee is legally eligible to work in the United States. This will include completing the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification. Charter schools are also required to report any new employee to a designated state new hire registry. Many states accept a copy of Form W-4 with employer information added. Each new employee is required to complete the Form W-4. Charter schools must also record each new employee's name and number from his or her social security card.

Unemployment Compensation

The U.S. Department of Labor does not administer or oversee unemployment insurance (UI) programs. Unemployment insurance benefits are determined at the state level. Each state's laws, procedures, taxation rates, qualification requirements, and benefits are unique. Another agency within the Department of Labor – the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) – sets minimum requirements for and provides guidance to the state workforce security agencies. You should contact your state office(s) of workforce security for information.

Workers Compensation

Employers with one or more full-time, part-time, seasonal, or occasional employees are required to maintain a workers compensation policy unless specifically exempt from the law. Workers' compensation is required to be in place when the first employee is hired.

There are a number of exemptions to the workers compensation requirement, but most of them will not apply to your employment situation. Therefore, you should count on providing workers' compensation insurance for your employees. There are numerous penalties for failure to do so,

For example, if one of your employees is injured and you do not have workers' compensation insurance in effect at the time of the injury, you can be personally liable for all benefits, including medical and wage loss, provided under the Workers' Compensation Law. An uninsured employer may also be liable for a penalty of 10% of the amount of medical and wage loss benefits as well as attorney fees if the injured worker is represented by an attorney.

In addition, employers who operate without workers' compensation insurance can be liable for a penalty of \$2.00 per day per employee or \$25.00 per day, whichever amount is greater. The Workers' Compensation Law authorizes the Industrial Commission to file a lawsuit in district court to obtain an injunction prohibiting the employer from operating the business while in violation of the Workers' Compensation Law.

Additional School Services

5.1 Additional School Services

Finally, operating a business without workers' compensation insurance is a misdemeanor under Idaho law and the employer may be subject to criminal penalties.

If you have contract workers, whether the contract is verbal or written, the workers may be considered employees under the Workers' Compensation Law. To ensure you are in compliance with the law, contact an Industrial Commission Employer Compliance representative to discuss your situation. Your requirement for coverage is considered on a case-by-case basis.

Workers' compensation insurance premiums are based on payroll and vary according to the type of business or work performed by the employees. The employer is required by law to pay the entire cost of workers' compensation insurance coverage. Deducting any portion of the cost of these premiums from employee wages is specifically prohibited. Your insurance agent or representative can assist you with determining your individual workers' compensation insurance cost.

Employers can obtain workers' compensation insurance through one of four sources:

- **Private Insurance:** There are over 270 private insurance companies authorized to issue workers' compensation insurance in Idaho. For information, contact an insurance agent or company representative.
- **State Insurance Fund:** Managed by the state and available to Idaho employers, the State Insurance Fund is headquartered in Boise, with field offices located throughout Idaho. Contact any of their offices or your insurance agent for more information.
- **Assigned Risk Pool:** Employers unable to obtain coverage from private insurance companies or the State Insurance Fund can apply for coverage through the assigned risk pool. The pool is administered by the National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI). Contact your insurance agent or NCCI at (800) 622-4123 for more information.
- **Self-Insurance:** This option is available to Idaho employers with large payrolls who are able to meet specific requirements. Approval for self-insurance must be granted by the Idaho Industrial Commission.

The Idaho Industrial Commission

The Idaho Industrial Commission performs the following duties:

- Regulates workers' compensation activities in Idaho, including companies licensed to issue workers' compensation policies
- Settles disputes between injured workers and insurers
- Decides appeals of unemployment decisions from the Idaho Department of Labor
- Ensures that employers have workers' compensation coverage as required by law
- Provides no-cost rehabilitation services to Idaho workers injured on the job

Additional School Services

5.1 Additional School Services

- Provides compensation to innocent victims of crime through the Crime Victims Compensation Program

Public Employee Retirement System

The Public Employee Retirement System of Idaho (PERSI) is a \$5.8 billion retirement plan designed to provide secure, long-term pension benefits for employees who choose careers in public service. PERSI is a qualified, tax-deferred plan under IRS Code Section 401(a).

PERSI was created in 1963 by the Idaho Legislature with funding effective July 1, 1965. The system's members and beneficiaries receive direct benefits through retirement, disability and death benefit programs. By law, agencies of the State of Idaho and school districts are PERSI members. Any eligible employee working for an employer member of PERSI automatically becomes an active member of the plan. Generally, your employees will be eligible for PERSI membership if they normally work 20 hours or more per week, or are teachers who work half-time or more, and their employment is for five or more consecutive months.

To contribute to your employees' plans, you will take a designated percentage of salary from their paychecks every pay period. That money will be deposited into a retirement account set up for them. You, as the employer, will also contribute a designated amount to PERSI each pay period.

Contact information for PERSI:

PERSI Boise Office
607 N 8th Street
Boise, ID 83702
Phone: 208/334-3365 or 1-800-451-8228
Fax: 208/334-4026

PERSI Coeur d'Alene Office
2005 Ironwood Parkway, Ste 142
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
Phone: 208/ 769-1474 or 1-800-962-8228
Fax: 208/769-1476

PERSI Pocatello Office
850 E. Center, Ste D
Pocatello, ID 83201
Phone: 208/236-6225 or 1-800-762-8228
Fax: 208/236-6159

New charter schools need to request a Choice Plan 401(k) Enrollment Kit by e-mail on the website: www.persi.state.id.us/html/contact_form.cfm

You can print a PDF version of the Member Handbook at: www.persi.state.id.us/html/handbook/

Additional School Services

5.1 Additional School Services

Health Insurance

Section 33-5205(3)(m), Idaho Code, requires a public charter school's charter to include a provision ensuring that all staff members of the public charter school will be covered by PERSI, federal social security, unemployment insurance, worker's compensation insurance, and health insurance. Charter school must provide the same group health insurance benefits to all non-certificated employees who work twenty hours or more per week as are provided to certificated employees. (Section 33-517A, Idaho Code)

Additional School Services*5.1 Additional School Services*

Additional School Services

Like traditional public schools, charter schools offer a number of services in addition to their basic educational programs. These services ensure the availability and effectiveness of the charter school to all students, enabling them to reach their full potential. Several such services are addressed in this section.

Services for Special Education Students

The provision of special education is an expensive and complex, yet rewarding, issue for public charter schools. Many parents around Idaho share inspiring stories about the success their special education children have found in public charter schools. However, some schools have struggled in their efforts to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all students as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). Your consideration of special education students throughout the planning phases of charter school development will largely determine the success or failure of your special education program.

Parents of students with disabilities want their children to enjoy the same educational opportunities available to children without disabilities. Charter schools are public schools and should be led by governing boards committed to fulfilling their obligation to serve all children, including those with disabilities. The challenge before you is to help all students in your charter school succeed. Overcoming this challenge will require both resources and strategies that support the provision of educational services needed by students with disabilities.

To accommodate these students and their families, it is essential that the charter school's staff and governing board understand the laws pertaining to special education and know what it looks like in practice. Failing to understand the requirements and guidelines can cause problems or even lead to legal action. Below is an introduction to special education in public schools. When in doubt, it is always advisable to consult with experts in special education requirements and guidelines.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) is a federal law that protects the rights of students with disabilities. It says that all students are entitled to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), which means that students with disabilities have the right to receive educational services tailored to meet their individual needs.

Definition of Special Education

Special education is specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. It can include individual or small group instruction, curricular or instructional modifications, transition services, assistive technology devices, or other specialized services. Some special education students are also entitled to related services such as physical, occupational or speech therapy, and/or special transportation. Special education is provided according to an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) that is developed for each student by the IEP team, a group of individuals including educators and the student's parents. Special education must be provided at no cost to parents.

Additional School Services

5.2 Services for Special Education Students

Eligibility for Special Education

The existence of a disability does not, by itself, mean that a student is eligible for services under the IDEA. To be eligible, a student must have a disability that adversely affects educational performance and requires specially designed instruction. Students must be identified under one or more of the following categories: autism, cognitive impairment, deaf-blindness, deafness, developmental delay, emotional disturbance, health impairment, hearing impairment, language impairment, learning disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, speech impairment, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment including blindness. Pursuant to the Administrative Rules of the Idaho State Board of Education, the State Department of Education (SDE) has established State Eligibility Criteria for special education services for categorical and non-categorical eligibility consistent with the IDEA. (IDAPA 08.02.03)

Further clarification of the need for special education and the criteria for eligibility can be found in the SDE's Primer on Special Education in Charter Schools. If a student with a disability needs only a related service and not special education, then the student is not eligible, unless the related service is needed by the student to benefit from his or her special education program. (In Idaho, speech therapy and language therapy are considered to be special education.)

Charter schools are entitled to receive IDEA funding and are responsible for meeting the requirements of IDEA to provide a FAPE to eligible children with disabilities. One requirement of FAPE is that students with disabilities are to be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE). This means that, to the greatest extent possible, students with disabilities must be educated alongside non-disabled students. FAPE must also include related services, transition services, supplementary aids and services, and/or assistive technology devices and services required to help the student benefit from his or her education program.

The definition of FAPE under IDEA means special education and related services that are:

- FREE – provided at public expense;
- APPROPRIATE – provided in conformity with a properly developed IEP;
- PUBLIC – provided under public supervision and direction;
- EDUCATION – includes preschool, elementary, and secondary education that meets the education standards, regulations, and administrative policies and procedures issued by the State Department of Education.

Essential Components of a Special Education Program

Special education requirements can be complex and confusing. Charter school leaders should become thoroughly familiar with state and federal laws governing the provision of FAPE, identifying or referring students who may need special education, conducting evaluations, determining eligibility, developing and implementing IEPs, transition planning for secondary students, educating students in the LRE, involving parents, and providing due process.

Additional School Services

5.2 Services for Special Education Students

Before opening, you must determine who will be responsible for ensuring that special education services are provided according to federal requirements. Your options include:

- employing full- or part-time professionals to serve special education students;
- contracting with qualified individuals;
- negotiating a contract with your local district to provide special education services; or
- using a combination of the above options or other creative ideas to provide special education services.

Regardless of which option you select, special education services must be provided by qualified professionals. This means that special education teachers and speech therapists must be appropriately certificated/endorsed.

You should plan on providing in-service training needs of your special education personnel. You should also consider providing the training that general education teachers will require to meet the needs of students with disabilities who are in their classes.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Charter schools are responsible for ensuring that all programs and services are accessible to all students and parents. This requirement may necessitate that you update your facility to accommodate students and parents with mobility or sensory impairments.

Similarly, transportation is considered a related service under the IDEA. This means special education students may be entitled to transportation to and from school even though the charter school does not typically provide transportation.

Other Laws Governing the Provision of Services to Students with Disabilities

In addition to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, two other federal laws protect students with disabilities:

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by any agency or program that receives federal funds.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 also prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and extends coverage to agencies and programs that do not receive federal funds.

Both define an "individual with disabilities" quite broadly and as a result, protect more students than the IDEA. Section 33-2002, Idaho Code, is the citation for our state special education law.

Services for Limited English Proficient Students

Defining a Limited English Proficient (LEP) Student

A limited English proficient student is defined as an individual who has a native language other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; or is a Native American and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on such individual's level of English language proficiency; and who has difficulty speaking, reading, writing or understanding the English language, whose difficulties may deny such individual the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to fully participate in our society.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Title III: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students details the requirements for LEP programs and the way in which LEP students are to be instructed. Nothing under NCLB supersedes the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) regulations for instructing English language learners. The Idaho Consent Decree also details protocol for serving LEP students within Idaho.

Public charter schools must provide English language development services for eligible LEP students who enroll, and LEP designation may not be a factor in enrollment lottery procedures.

Any Idaho LEA that enrolls LEP students must assess the students for their level of language proficiency and place them in a program if services are needed. All LEAs with one or more LEP student must meet the requirements of NCLB, including but not limited to the following:

- Identification of limited English proficiency through a Home Language Survey (HLS) given to all new students upon registration
- Development of a district LEP plan for meeting needs of LEP students
- Submission of an annual LEP plan update to the state LEP program
- Provision of notifications to parents, translated to the extent practicable
- Provision of parental outreach opportunities
- Provision of continuous program monitoring
- Provision of comprehensive professional development to all teachers and paraprofessionals that is applicable for serving LEP students
- Provision of annual reports to the LEP program at the State Board of Education

Essential Educational Components of an LEP Program

Instruction leading to second language proficiency for LEP students should be integrated into the overall curriculum, be responsive to cultural differences, and maintain high learning and achievement standards.

An LEP student should be able to benefit from instruction that addresses all content areas in a manner that will be comprehensible to him or her. Finally, an LEP student should receive specific English language development

Additional School Services

5.3 Services for Limited English Proficient Students

appropriate for his or her linguistic abilities. This will help each student benefit from instruction in the classroom and simultaneously achieve appropriate academic levels.

Reporting Requirements

LEP data must be collected annually for submission to the State LEP Program. This data emphasizes the requirements outlined in Title III of NCLB and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Total number of students assessed as LEP with a language placement test;
- Total number of LEP students served;
- Progress/growth in the English language made by students enrolled in the program;
- Progress/growth in the academic content area made by students enrolled in the program;
- Types of language instruction educational programs implemented within the school/district;
- Total number of certified or licensed teachers working with language instruction educational programs;
- Number of paraprofessionals serving LEP students in a language development program;
- Number of students exited from the program each year;
- Proposed changes, if any, for the subsequent year;

All student data at the district/school level must be compiled by gender, race/ethnicity, grade, all special program coding, date placed into an LEP program, and assessment scores.

Accountability for Serving LEP Students

The State LEP Program uses a variety of methods to verify that LEAs are making every effort to develop and implement programs that will ensure access to an equitable education for all LEP students and meet requirements. All LEAs with LEP students participate in the following types of data collection and monitoring devices:

- District/school LEP Plan and annual updates
- Educational Learning Plan (ELP) for Limited English Proficient Students that are given classroom accommodations
- On-Site Visits
- LEP Program Reviews

Language Proficiency Assessments

All LEAs must administer the Idaho English Language Assessment (IELA) to evaluate LEP students' oral, reading, and writing proficiency. The assessment provides information for student evaluation regarding growth and proficiency in the English language. The State Board of Education will provide the IELA annually every spring for LEAs to administer in order to measure the progress of the LEP students they are serving. An IELA/Placement assessment is a

Additional School Services***5.3 Services for Limited English Proficient Students***

separate assessment provided by the State Board of Education and is used to determine placement into an LEP Program upon fall registration or enrollment.

All IELA assessment information can be found at:

<http://www.boardofed.idaho.gov/lep/LEPAssessment.asp>

District/School and State Coordination

Each LEA must designate an LEP Director to coordinate the LEP program and manage correspondence with the State Board of Education. LEA - LEP Coordinator information and any LEP programming questions may be directed to the State Board of Education's LEP Program Manager.

Gifted and Talented Students

Definition of Gifted and Talented

Section 33-2001, Idaho Code describes gifted/talented children as “...those students who are identified as possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of high performing capabilities in intellectual, creative, specific academic, or leadership areas, or ability in the performing or visual arts and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities.” All public schools, including charter schools, must identify and serve gifted/talented students.

Laws Governing the Provision of Services to Gifted/Talented Students

Section 33-2003, Idaho Code, states that each LEA is responsible to identify and provide instruction and training for gifted/talented children between the ages of five and eighteen. The State Board of Education shall, through its Department of Education, determine eligibility criteria and assist school districts in developing a variety of flexible approaches for instruction and training that may include administrative accommodations, curriculum modification, and special programs.

Each LEA is required to have a plan for the identification and service of gifted and talented students. This plan, which is updated every three years, should include a vision statement, a definition of giftedness, program goals, program options, identification procedures, and program evaluation (IDAPA 08.02.03.999)

Essential Components of a Gifted and Talented Program

Many components need to be considered when developing a G/T Program. The following are areas that, if addressed, will enhance the quality of the program:

Program Coordinator: Regardless of the size of the program, there must be a LEA-level staff member ultimately responsible for program development, implementation and funding. (IDAPA 08.02.03.999)

In-service Training: Teachers themselves should, whenever possible, be involved in planning how teaching staff will receive training. This might be accomplished through a needs assessment survey or a faculty planning committee.

Staff and Facility Needs: LEAs with multiple schools often share a G/T specialist among buildings. Sometimes the teacher functions in an itinerant role and travels between the schools; other times a central location is established and the students are brought to it. Also, consider that G/T programs, and therefore their staff and facility needs, vary widely. Some programs offer an hour or two each week of random enrichment while “pullout” programs may remove the student from his or her regular classroom for the full day.

Community Resources: Involvement with the community builds support, not just for your G/T Program, but for your entire educational program. Consider

Additional School Services

5.4 Services for Gifted and Talented Students

inviting community members to serve as mentors or resources for career education.

Policy: LEAs should develop policy concerning acceleration and continuity of services throughout the grades. This policy should include a statement about the classroom assignments of students participating in G/T programs. Remember that the goal of G/T services is to provide more appropriate learning experiences, not just more work.

Exits, Removals and Requests for Reviews: In planning the identification process, remember to outline procedures for handling exits, removals and requests for review.

Student Files, Documentation and Record Keeping

Every student who is identified as G/T within the school district will have a confidential file documenting the need for services. The student's file should include the following materials:

- Referral and consent for testing
- Summary of test results
- Assessment documentation, e.g., checklists, nominations, test reports, anecdotal information, portfolio rating scale, etc.
- Decision of the G/T MDT

Migrant Education Program

Goal of the Migrant Education Program

The goal of the Migrant Education Program (MEP) is to ensure that all migrant students reach challenging academic standards and graduate with a high school diploma (or complete a GED) that prepares them for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment.

The MEP is authorized under Part C of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended. The statutory purposes of the MEP set forth in Section 1301 are to:

- Support high-quality and comprehensive educational programs for migrant children to help reduce the educational disruption and other problems that result from repeated moves;
- Ensure that migrant children who move among the states are not penalized in any manner by disparities among the states in curriculum, graduation requirements, and state academic content and student academic achievement standards;
- Ensure that migrant children are provided with the appropriate educational services (including supportive services) that address their special needs in a coordinated and efficient manner;
- Ensure that migrant children receive full and appropriate opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards that all children are expected to meet;
- Design programs to help migrant children overcome educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems, and other factors that inhibit the ability of such children to do well in school, and to prepare such children to make a successful transition to postsecondary education or employment; and
- Ensure that migrant children benefit from state and local systemic reforms.

Definition of Migratory Child

The term migratory child means a child who is, or whose parent or spouse is, a migratory agricultural worker, including a migratory dairy worker, or a migratory fisher, and who, in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain, or accompany such parent or spouse in order to obtain, temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work has moved from one school district to another.

Providing Migrant Education Services

As public schools, charter schools must provide access for migrant children to the same free, appropriate public education provided for all children. Title I, Part C is a supplementary educational program, and your charter school may apply to the SDE for a sub-grant by submitting a proposal explaining how it will improve teaching and learning for migrant children and remove barriers to school enrollment, attendance, and improve academic achievement of migrant children.

Additional School Services

5.5 Migrant Education Programs

There are no federal or state laws governing the provision of services to migrant students, as it is a “supplementary” educational program under the Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-382). The program’s purpose is to improve teaching and learning for disadvantaged children and to help them meet challenging academic content and student performance standards.

Essential Components of a Migrant Education Program

Migrant Education Programs support high quality and comprehensive educational programs for migratory children to address disruptions in schooling and other problems that result from repeated moves. Essential components include:

Instruction: High quality, comprehensive instructional programs that address the needs of students who frequently move.

Assessment: Migrant children are to be included in statewide assessments used to measure students’ academic achievement.

Record Transfer: Timely exchange of migrant student education and health records to provide students with appropriate services, avoid redundant testing, and grant credit for completed course work.

Certificates of Eligibility: Documentation of student eligibility based on qualifying employment date and qualifying move.

Parental Involvement: Requires appropriate consultation with parents in the planning and implementation of the migrant education program.

Instructional Services: Educational activities for preschool-age children and instruction in elementary and secondary schools, such as tutoring before and after school.

Support Services: Educational related activities, such as advocacy for migrant children; health, nutrition, and social services for migrant families; necessary educational supplies; and transportation.

Child Nutrition Programs

The provision of school food service is at the discretion of each Idaho LEA, including charter school LEA's. Charter schools are not required to provide nutrition programs, but many choose to do so as a service to their school communities.

Options for Providing Food Service

Option 1: Students attending public charter schools in Idaho are eligible to participate in federal Child Nutrition Programs: National School Lunch, School Breakfast, and Special Milk, through the authorizing district's non-profit food service operations. Donated commodity foods and federal cash reimbursements are available to help support the program, and to provide for meals at free or reduced prices to eligible students. Charter schools may have a simple agreement with their local school districts to provide this service.

Through this option, a charter school's nutrition program could be run either under the umbrella of the local school district or on its own. Coordinating efforts with the local school district is in the best financial interest of the charter school. If a school's nutrition program is self-operated, someone on its staff must attend all necessary trainings to assure compliance with regulations. If the service is run under the umbrella of the local school district, several of these requirements will already be taken care of under the existing USDA Child Nutrition Program.

Option 2: Should a charter school elect not to take advantage of the benefits of the federal Child Nutrition Program, it is free to arrange for its own meal service or alternate catered food service on an a la carte basis, or through an outside vendor. However, this type of meal service is not eligible for federal reimbursement.

Option 3: Charter schools may choose not to provide any formal food service. In these schools, parents must provide meals for their children to bring to school.

Relationship Between Food and Student Learning

Food can have a profound effect on students' learning. Studies demonstrate the important connection between the adequacy of a child's nutrient intake and his or her ability to learn. Federal Child Nutrition Programs are designed with this in mind. An alternate food service would require careful design and monitoring to ensure nutritional needs are being met.

Free or Reduced Lunch

Offering free or reduced lunch for qualifying students makes your charter school more accessible to students who wish to attend. Seventy-five percent of the charter schools operating in the 2004-05 school year provided opportunities for students to get a free or reduced lunch. Several charter schools have their own cafeterias and cook lunches on site for all students. Others partner with their authorizing school districts to have food brought in.

Additional School Services

5.6 Child Nutrition Programs

Some charter schools don't receive reimbursement from the federal government to offer their lunch programs, but they partner with local catering companies to have food brought in. These schools pay out of general operating funds for the lunches of students that qualify for free lunch or a portion of the lunches of students that qualify for reduced lunch.

Perhaps the most creative way of handling free and reduced lunch is seen at a charter school in Idaho where the secretary specially makes a sack lunch for any student who requests it and for all students who qualify for a free or reduced lunch. Students whose families do not qualify for free and reduced lunch pay for the lunch. Students, whose families do qualify receive the lunch at a reduced price or for free. The virtual charter schools in operation at the time of this writing do not provide lunches.

Data for Title I Funding

Charter schools that choose not to provide a nutrition program may wish to collect data regarding eligibility for free and reduced lunch anyway, in order to evaluate school eligibility for Title I funding. Schools that choose to collect this data should follow appropriate guidelines in ensuring the confidentiality of these records.

Student Transportation

Offering students transportation to and from school makes charter schools more accessible to families. When providing transportation for their students, charter schools must comply with all laws and rules that govern transportation for students.

Section 33-1501, Idaho Code, provides that “...the board of trustees of each district, including specially chartered school districts, shall, where practicable, provide transportation for the public school pupils within the district...No board of trustees shall be required to provide transportation for any pupil living less than one and one-half (1 ½) miles from the nearest appropriate school.”

The statute does allow a school to transport students who reside less than one and one-half (1 ½) miles from the school when such transportation is warranted by concern for the health and safety of the students. More specific criteria related to this topic should be established in your petition, and additional guidance may be found in Idaho’s Pupil Transportation Manual, available on the SDE website (see “Safety Planning”).

Bear in mind that, should your charter school enroll special education students who require transportation in order to attend, the charter school must provide this transportation.

There are several means by which charter schools may provide transportation services. These include:

- Contracting with their local districts
- Contracting with outside contractors
- Purchasing school buses and operating self-contained pupil transportation services
- Paying parents when transportation is not provided (in lieu of transportation) when it is economically feasible to do so.

If a charter school chooses to provide transportation services by any method other than those listed above, it may not be eligible for reimbursement of transportation costs.

Qualifications for Bus Drivers and Other Transportation Providers

Qualifications to be met by individuals employed by a public charter school must be defined in the petition to establish a charter school. A charter school may contract with the school district or may outsource transportation services; however, qualifications of school bus drivers should be detailed in the petition and the contract.

School bus operations are generally exempt from compliance to most Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations; however, Section 33-1509, Idaho Code requires compliance to specific Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

Additional School Services

5.7 Student Transportation

(FMCSA) regulations. School bus operations and operators must also comply with FMCSA drug and alcohol testing (49 CFR Part 40) and FMCSA commercial driver licensing (CDL) requirements (Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986).

Procedures for Financial and Programmatic Auditing Relating to Transportation Costs

Charter schools are required to maintain and submit records and reports for purposes of reimbursement (Sections 33-1006, 33-1501 through 33-1514, 33-5205(3)(t), and 33-5208(4), Idaho Codes).

Procedural guidance is provided in Idaho's Pupil Transportation Manual and in Standards for Idaho School Buses and Operations pertaining to: school bus inspections, route evaluations, school bus operations, personnel qualifications and oversight, contracting for transportation services, and financial reporting.

Determining State Support of Transportation Costs

In addition to maintaining and submitting records and submitting required forms, charter schools are subject to in-depth program reviews, fiscal audits, and reviews of annual reimbursement claims supporting documentation of each school district pupil transportation program at a frequency adequate to ensure compliance with state law, accuracy of data and reimbursement claims, and safety of school buses (Section 33-1511, Idaho Code).

Figuring Estimated Costs of Transportation for the First Year of Operation into the Authorized, One-Time Advance Payment

For charter schools in the initial year of operation, the petition shall include a proposal for transportation services with an estimated first year cost. The State Department of Education will include in the annual appropriation to the charter school eighty percent (80%) of the estimated transportation cost. The final appropriation payment in July shall reflect eighty-five percent (85%) of the actual cost. However, charter schools need to be aware that transportation costs are paid in arrears. The advance payment received by the charter school will be for the first year only. When the charter school receives the final payment in July it will have been for the year just ended. Payment for the second year of operation will not be made until July of the third year. Charter schools will not continue to receive advance payments for transportation every year. Therefore, there will be a gap in payments between the advance payment prior to opening and the reimbursement payment made in July of the third year.

Transportation Privileges and Suspension

Charter schools are subject to all applicable federal and state laws relating to suspension or expulsion. Policies and procedures adopted by charter schools for the classroom should also be followed in the transportation environment.

Rules and procedures established by the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education should be considered when adopting local policy. Also, federal and state laws, regulations, and procedural safeguards relating to Special Education, Title I Parts A and C, Alternative Placement, etc.

Additional School Services***5.7 Student Transportation***

must be incorporated into all charter school policy relating to suspension or expulsion.

School Counseling and Student Assistance

Public schools, including public charter schools, must provide a comprehensive guidance program aligned with the Idaho Comprehensive Guidance Model. This program should address personal-social, career, and academic domains and should include classroom curriculum, individual guidance and crisis management. Charter schools that serve a high percentage of at-risk students should also plan for services that provide students and parents with appropriate information needed to access community resources.

Charter school boards should consider developing a student assistance program in order to address a variety of student, parent and community needs. Information regarding best practices in this area can be obtained by contacting the Safe and Drug Free School Coordinator at the State Department of Education.

Definitions and Abbreviations

The definitions provided in this manual are not legal definitions. For a legal interpretation of terms included in charter school legislation and administrative rules, consult a private attorney.

1. **Accredited.** Schools must be accredited through the State Department of Education and the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools by meeting appropriate accreditation standards.
2. **Administrator.** Also called a principal or director in a charter school. School administrators have met the State Board of Education approved certification requirements for principals or superintendents.
3. **Advanced Opportunities.** Advanced placement courses, dual credit courses, technical preparation, or international baccalaureate programs.
4. **Advanced Placement®.** The Advanced Placement Program is administered by the College Board. AP students may take one or more college level courses in a variety of subjects. AP courses are not tied to a specific college curriculum, but rather follow national College Board curricula. While taking the AP exam is optional, students can earn college credit by scoring well on the national exams. It is up to the discretion of the receiving college to accept the scores from the AP exams to award college credit or advanced standing.
5. **Alternative Assessment.** Any type of assessment in which students create a response to a question rather than choose a response from a given list, as with multiple-choice or true/false. Alternative assessments can include short-answer questions, essays, oral presentations, exhibitions, and portfolios.
6. **Appeal.** A proceeding undertaken to reverse a decision by bringing it to a higher authority.
7. **Assessment.** The process of quantifying, describing, or gathering information about skills, knowledge or performance.
8. **Assessment Standards.** Statements setting forth guidelines for evaluating student work, as in the “Standards for the Assessment of Reading and Writing”; or measures of student performance.
9. **Authorized Chartering Entity.** As defined in Section 33-5202A(1), Idaho Code, and an authorized chartering entity may be either the local board of trustees of a school district in this state, or the Idaho Public Charter School Commission. Often called an authorizer.
10. **Board.** The Idaho State Board of Education.

11. **Charter.** Defined in Section 33-5202A(2), Idaho Code, as the grant of authority approved by the authorized chartering entity to the board of directors of the charter school. The final, approved version of a charter school petition submitted to an authorized chartering entity.
12. **Classified Personnel.** Personnel hired by the charter school that do non-education work. For instance, clerical, janitorial, and lunchroom staff are classified personnel.
13. **Commission.** The Idaho Public Charter School Commission, as provided by Section 33-5213, Idaho Code.
14. **Criteria.** Guidelines, rules or principles by which student responses, products, or performances, are judged.
15. **Curriculum.** Curriculum comprises part of the educational program and standards of a school. It details what students should know and be able to do upon completion of the school's program. Curriculum should be written for each subject and each grade level. The method(s) of instruction should also be included, as well as the type of instructional materials the school plans to use.
16. **Department.** The Idaho Department of Education.
17. **Dual Credit.** Dual credit allows high school students to simultaneously earn credit toward a high school diploma and a postsecondary degree or certificate. Postsecondary institutions work closely with high schools to deliver college courses that are identical to those offered on the college campus. Credits earned in a dual credit class become part of the student's permanent college record. Students may enroll in dual credit programs taught at the high school or on the college campus.
18. **Educational Program.** A charter school's educational program has many components including curriculum, curricular materials, methods of instruction, and assessment aimed at fulfilling the school's vision and goals.
19. **ELL.** English Language Learner. Students identified by home language survey and the statewide language proficiency test as not proficient in English language skills.
20. **Financial Audit.** An audit designed to address questions of accounting and reporting of financial transactions, including commitments, authorizations, and receipt and disbursement of funds. The purpose is to verify that there are sufficient controls over cash and cash-like assets and that there are adequate processes controls over the acquisition and use of resources.
21. **Founder.** Defined in Section 33-5202A(3), Idaho Code, as a person, including employees or staff of a public charter school, who makes a

material contribution toward the establishment of a public charter school in accordance with criteria determined by the board of directors of the public charter school, and who is designated as such at the time the board of directors acknowledges and accepts such contribution. The criteria for determining when a person is a founder shall not discriminate against any person on any basis prohibited by the federal or state constitutions or any federal, state, or local law. The designation of a person as a founder, and the admission preferences available to the children of a founder, shall not constitute pecuniary benefits.

- 22. Gifted and Talented Students.** Students identified as having exceptional skills in a specific area or variety of areas and qualifying for participation in the schools gifted/talented program
- 23. Goals.** Goals are the overall outcomes that become part of the criteria by which the school is judged. Goals need to be specific and measurable.
- 24. Governing Board.** The entity responsible for managing the operations of the charter school. Operations include hiring and evaluating the administrator, overseeing the budget and contracts, and developing policies. The governing board is not responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school
- 25. IDEA.** The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act is a federal law that guarantees all eligible children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 (or until the child graduates) access to a free appropriate public education designed to meet their individual needs. It provides federal funds to assist states in the education of students with disabilities and requires that states ensure the rights of children with disabilities and their parents are protected.
- 26. LEP.** Limited English Proficient Students. Students identified by home language survey and the statewide language proficiency test as not proficient in English language skills.
- 27. Learning Plan.** The plan that outlines a student's program of study, which should include a rigorous academic core and a related sequence of electives in academic, professional-technical education (PTE), or humanities aligned with the student's post graduation goals.
- 28. Lottery.** A drawing of lots used to determine which students will be enrolled in a charter school whose capacity is insufficient to enroll all applicants.
- 29. Migrant Education.** Education provided for students who have moved with their parents, within the last 36 months, either between states or districts, in search of agricultural work.
- 30. Mission.** A mission statement expresses the expected outcome of the school. It should include enough specifics to differentiate the charter

school from other schools.

- 31. Non-profit Corporation.** A non-profit corporation generally exists for the purpose of benefiting society, such as charities, churches, or schools. The net income of a non-profit corporation must be used to further the goals of the corporation, not to enrich individual members, directors, or officers.
- 32. Nutrition Programs.** Programs provided to students for breakfast and/or lunch services. Charter schools are not required to provide nutrition programs.
- 33. Performance Assessment.** Direct observation of student performance or student work and professional judgment of the quality of that performance. Good quality performance assessment has pre-established performance criteria.
- 34. Performance-Based Assessment.** The measurement of educational achievement by tasks that is similar or identical to those that are required in the instructional environment, as in performance assessment tasks, exhibitions, or projects, or in work that is assembled over time into portfolio collections.
- 35. Performance Criteria.** A description of the characteristics that will be judged for a task. Performance criteria may be holistic, analytic trait, general or specific. Performance criteria are expressed as a rubric or scoring guide. Anchor points or benchmark performances may be used to identify each level of competency in the rubric or scoring guide.
- 36. Petition.** Defined in Section 33-5202A(4), Idaho Code, a petition is means the document submitted by a person or persons to the authorized chartering entity to request the creation of a public charter school. Once approved, the petition becomes the school's charter.
- 37. Petitioners.** The group of individuals who submit a petition to establish a new public charter school, or to convert an existing traditional public school to a public charter school, as provided by Section 33-5205, Idaho Code, and the procedures described in Sections 200 through 205 of these rules.
- 38. Philosophy Statement.** Another word for "vision statement," the philosophy statement should deal with basic, underlying assumptions about education and learning. The philosophy statement forms the blueprint for the charter school and articulates the very reason to form the charter school.
- 39. Portfolio.** A collection of materials that documents and demonstrates a student's academic and work-based learning. Although there is no standard format for a portfolio, it typically includes many forms of information that exhibit the student's knowledge, skills, and interests. By building a portfolio, students can recognize their own growth and learn to

take increased responsibility for their education. Teachers, mentors, and employers can use portfolios for assessment purposes and to record educational outcomes.

- 40. Programmatic Audit.** A review of a charter school's programs for compliance to statutory or other legal requirements. Some programmatic auditors also evaluate the charter school's effectiveness and offer suggestions for improvement.
- 41. Public Charter School.** Defined in Section 33-5202A(5), Idaho Code, as a school that is authorized under the Public Charter Schools Act, Title 33, Chapter 52, Idaho Code, to deliver public education in Idaho.
- 42. Public Meeting/Hearing.** Any meeting of the governing body of a public agency at which a quorum is present to deliberate or make a decision on any matter is open to the public; any person is permitted to attend such a meeting. Idaho state law provides that government entities will conduct their business in open meetings. The only exception is for executive sessions, which may be closed to the public in specific circumstances as authorized by statute.
- 43. Public Records.** Public records are state records which the public has a right to examine upon request. Any document that contains information relating to the conduct or administration of the public's business which is prepared, owned, used or retained by a state agency is considered a public record and is available for the public's inspection unless it is exempt from disclosure pursuant to statute.
- 44. Public Virtual School.** Defined in Section 33-5202A(6), Idaho Code, as a public charter school that may serve students in more than one school district and through which the primary method for the delivery of instruction to all of its pupils is through virtual distance learning or online technologies.
- 45. Revoke.** To void or annul by recalling, withdrawing, or reversing. Under certain circumstances, authorized chartering entities have the authority to revoke charters.
- 46. School Year.** Means the period beginning on July 1 and ending the next succeeding June 30 of each year.
- 47. Special Education.** Services and education programs provided to students who qualify as a result of their individual disabilities.
- 48. Statewide Testing.** Assessment program required by the state in order to ensure all students are making adequate progress.
- 49. Student Learning Goals.** Statements describing the general areas in which students will learn and achieve. Student learning goals typically reflect what students are expected to know by the time they leave high

school, such as to read and communicate effectively; think critically and solve problems; develop positive self-concept, respect for others and healthy patterns of behavior; work effectively in groups as well as individually; show appreciation for the arts and creativity; demonstrate civic, global and environmental responsibility; recognize and celebrate multicultural diversity; exhibit technological literacy; have a well developed knowledge base which enhances understanding and decision making, and demonstrate positive problem solving and thinking skills.

- 50. Sufficiency Review.** Review of a petition by the State Department of Education to ensure that legal and educational requirements are included in the petition.
- 51. Vision.** A charter school's vision statement should deal with basic, underlying assumptions about education and learning. The vision statement forms the blueprint for the charter school and articulates the philosophical reason to form the charter school.
- 52. Waiting Lists.** Lists of applicants developed once a charter school's student enrollment cap has been reached. Several waiting lists may be necessary depending on the preferences set out in the charter. Waiting lists cannot be carried over from year to year.

Useful Contacts

Accreditation, State Department of Education, 332-6942
Charter Schools, State Department of Education, 332-6955
Charter Schools Program Manager, State Board of Education, 334-2270
Curriculum and Instruction, State Department of Education, 332-6890
Federal Title Programs, State Department of Education, 332-6901
Gifted and Talented Programs, State Department of Education, 332-6913
Idaho State Achievement Tests (ISAT), State Board of Education, 332-1573
Learning English Proficient, State Board of Education, 332-1586
Migrant Education, State Department of Education, 332-6907
Migrant Education Regional Offices:
 Eastern Idaho area, 785- 8835
 Central Idaho area, 878-6627
 Western Idaho area, 642-7284
Public Charter School Commission, State Board of Education, 334-2270
Public School Funding, State Department of Education, 332-6840
Safe and Drug Free Schools, State Department of Education, 332-6960
School Lunch, State Department of Education, 332-6820
Special Education, State Department of Education, 332-6910
State Board of Education, 334-2270
Teacher Certification, State Department of Education, 332-6884
Transportation, State Department of Education, 332-6851

Resources

Charter School Coalition – 375-3628
Idaho Association of School Administrators – 345-1171
Idaho Charter School Network – 426-2243
Idaho School Boards Association – 854-1476
Secretary of State, Corporation Division - for information on applying for status as a Nonprofit Corporation. – 334-2301

References

“10 Minutes to Better Board Meetings,” Planned Parenthood Federation of America Western Region Office, 333 Broadway, 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94133, by Norah Holmgren

“Becoming a Better Board Member,” written by Roger Fisher and William Ury

“How to Help Your Board Govern More and Manage Less,” National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 2000 L Street, NW, Suite 510, Washington DC 20036, by Richard P. Chait

“Principals of Good Practice.” National Association of Independent Schools, 1620 L Street, NW, Washington DC 20036-5605

“Ten Basic Responsibilities for Nonprofit Boards,” National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 2000 L Street, NW, Suite 510, Washington DC 20036, by Richard T. Ingram

“The Board Member’s Guide to Fund Raising: What Every Trustee Needs to Know About Raising Money,” by Fisher Howe

“Roberts Rules of Order.”

“The Search Handbook: A Step-by-Step Guide to Selecting the Right Leader for Your School.” National Association of Independent Schools, 1620 L Street, NW, Washington DC 20036-5605

Links

State Department of Education Websites

Accreditation:

www.sde.state.id.us/accreditation

Charter Schools:

www.sde.state.id.us/instruct/charter/

Federal Funds, Title I, Part A:

www.sde.state.id.us/sasa

Gifted and Talented:

www.sde.state.id.us/giftedtalented/manuals

Limited English Proficient Students:

<http://www.boardofed.idaho.gov/lep/index.asp>

Limited English Proficient Student Information for LEAs:

<http://www.boardofed.idaho.gov/lep/LEPDirectorInfo.asp>

Migrant Education:

www.sde.state.id.us/sasa/migrant.asp

Nutrition:

www.sde.state.id.us/child

Teacher Certification:

www.sde.state.id.us/certification

Special Education:

www.sde.state.id.us/SpecialEd/

Student Transportation:

<http://www.sde.state.id.us/finance/transportsiteindex.asp>

Title I Consolidated Plan and the Building Level Plans:

www.sde.state.id.us/sasa

Federal Websites

Social Security:

www.ssa.gov/slge/sitemap.htm

Student Transportation:

www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregs/fmcsrhome.htm

www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html

State of Idaho Websites

Administrative Rules:

<http://adm.idaho.gov/adminrules/rules/idapa08/08index.htm>

Charter School Commission:

www.chartercommission.id.gov/index.asp

Idaho Charter School Network:

www.csi.boisestate.edu/iscn.htm

Laws or Statutes:

<http://www3.state.id.us/idstat/TOC/33052KTOC.html>

Public Employees Retirement System:

www.persi.state.id.us

Secretary of State:

www.idsos.state.id.us/corp/corpform.htm

State Board of Education:

www.idahoboardofed.idaho.gov

Tax Commission:

www.tax.idaho.gov/forms_sales.htm

Workers Compensation Insurance Information:

www2.state.id.us/iic/

United States Department of Education Websites

Migrant Education:

www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html

United States Department of Education:

www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html

Other Helpful Websites

10 Common Board Problems:

www.help4NonProfits.org

www.boardsource.org

Charter Friends National Network:

www.charterfriends.org

Creating an Effective Charter School Governing Board Guidebook:

www.uscharterschools.org

Dollars and Sense II: Lessons from Good, Cost Effective Small Schools:

<http://www.goodschools.org/>

LexisNexis Disc Library for Idaho Education Laws:

www.lexisnexis.com

US Charter Schools Organization:

www.uscharterschools.org/pub/uscs_docs/index.htm

Applicable Laws and Rules Governing Charter Schools

Public Charter Schools Law, Title 33, Chapter 52, Idaho Code:

<http://www3.state.id.us/idstat/TOC/33052KTOC.html>

Rules Governing Charter Schools, IDAPA 08.02.04:

<http://adm.idaho.gov/adminrules/rules/idapa08/08index.htm>

Click on 08.02.04

Rules Governing the Public Charter School Commission, IDAPA 08.03.01:

<http://adm.idaho.gov/adminrules/rules/idapa08/08index.htm>

Click on 08.03.01

All Education Laws, Title 33:

<http://www3.state.id.us/idstat/TOC/33FTOC.html>

All Education Rules, IDAPA 08:

<http://adm.idaho.gov/adminrules/rules/idapa08/08index.htm>

**Charter School
Annual Budget Template**

	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
	Number	Rate	Amount	Number	Rate	Amount	Number	Rate	Amount
Number of Students	400			425			450		
Revenues:									
State Apportionment		\$ 4,400	\$1,760,000		\$ 4,400	\$1,870,000		\$ 4,400	\$1,980,000
State Transportation		85%	204,000		85%	216,750		85%	229,500
Nutrition Program	\$ 60		24,000	\$ 60		25,500	\$ 60		27,000
Federal Grants									
Contributions/Donations									
Insert Revenue Lines Here									
Total Revenues			\$1,988,000			\$2,112,250			\$2,236,500
Expenses:									
<u>Salaries:</u>					3.0%			3.0%	
Teachers	\$ 40,000	3	\$120,000	\$ 41,200	4	\$164,800	\$ 42,440	5	\$212,200
Special Ed	\$ 35,000	2	70,000	\$ 36,050	2	72,100	\$ 37,130	3	111,390
Instructional Aids	\$ 30,000	2	60,000	\$ 30,900	2	61,800	\$ 31,830	3	95,490
Classified/Office Staff	\$ 25,000	5	125,000	\$ 25,750	5	128,750	\$ 26,520	5	132,600
Administration	\$ 45,000	4	180,000	\$ 46,350	4	185,400	\$ 47,740	4	190,960
Nutritional Program	\$ 42,000	1	42,000	\$ 43,260	1	43,260	\$ 44,560	2	89,120
Librarian	\$ 45,000	1	45,000	\$ 46,350	1	46,350	\$ 47,740	1	47,740
Maintenance/Other	\$ 28,000	3	84,000	\$ 28,840	3	86,520	\$ 29,710	4	118,840
Insert Revenue Lines Here									
Total Salaries			\$726,000			\$788,980			\$998,340
<u>Benefits:</u>									
Retirement/PERSI	15.0%		\$108,900	15.0%		\$118,350	15.0%		\$149,750
Health/Life Insurance	8.0%		58,080	8.0%		63,120	8.0%		79,870
Payroll Taxes	8.0%		58,080	8.0%		63,120	8.0%		79,870
Workers Compensation	6.0%		43,560	6.0%		47,340	6.0%		59,900
Insert Revenue Lines Here									
Total Benefits			\$268,620			\$291,930			\$369,390
<u>Operating Expenses:</u>									
Textbooks	\$ 25.00		\$10,000	\$ 26.50		\$11,260	\$ 28.00		\$12,600
Supplies			\$14,000			\$14,000			\$14,000
Equipment			\$5,000			\$5,000			\$5,000
Contract Services			\$10,000			\$10,000			\$10,000
Legal			\$11,000			\$11,000			\$11,000
Accounting			\$5,500			\$5,500			\$5,500
Advertising/Marketing			\$3,000			\$3,000			\$3,000
Gas/Electric			\$31,000			\$31,000			\$31,000
Telephone			\$2,500			\$2,500			\$2,500
Liability & Property Insurance			\$8,000			\$8,000			\$8,000
Testing & Assessment			\$5,500			\$5,500			\$5,500
Staff Development			\$20,000			\$20,000			\$20,000
Consulting			\$42,000			\$42,000			\$42,000
Travel			\$9,000			\$9,000			\$9,000
Postage			\$1,000			\$1,000			\$1,000
Rents and Leases			\$300,000			\$300,000			\$300,000
Debt Retirement			\$150,000			\$140,000			\$130,000
Grounds & Maintenance			\$6,000			\$6,000			\$6,000
Miscellaneous			\$1,000			\$1,000			\$1,000
Insert Revenue Lines Here									
Total Operating Expenses			\$634,500			\$625,760			\$617,100
<u>Program Expenses:</u>									
Transportation	\$ 600		\$240,000	\$ 600		\$255,000	\$ 600		\$270,000
Nutrition Program	\$ 75		30,000	\$ 75		31,880	\$ 75		33,750
Insert Revenue Lines Here									
Total Benefits			\$270,000			\$286,880			\$303,750
Total Expenses			\$1,899,120			\$1,993,550			\$2,288,580
Net Operating Income/(Loss)			\$88,880			\$118,700			-\$52,080
Beginning Fund Balance			0			88,880			207,580
Ending Fund Balance			88,880			207,580			155,500

Required Elements of a Charter Petition Petitions to establish public charter schools are required by law to contain certain information. These requirements are set forth in Section 33-5205(3), Idaho Code. <i>*denotes a recommended item but one that is not required to be included in the petition by law or rule.</i>	
	*Cover Page that includes the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of proposed charter school • School year petitioning to open the charter school • Name of the school district affected by the attendance area • Where the public charter school building will be physically located or, if it is a virtual charter school, the physical location of the main office • Name, address, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address of the petitioner's authorized representative.
	*Table of Contents
	*Copy of the Articles of Incorporation file-stamped by the Idaho Secretary of State 33-5204 (1)
	*Copy of the signed bylaws adopted by the board of directors of the nonprofit corporation 33-5204 (1)
	*Documentation regarding insurance for liability and property loss 33-5204 (4)
	Elector petition forms with no fewer than 30 signatures and proof of elector qualifications 33-5205 (1)(a); 33-5205(3)
	*Vision and Mission Statements
	Describe the school's educational program and goals, including how each of the educational thoroughness standards as defined in Section 33-1612, Idaho Code, shall be fulfilled. 33-5205 (3)(a)
	Identify measurable student educational standards that describe the extent to which all students enrolled in the charter school demonstrate they have attained the skills and knowledge specified as goals. 33-5205 (3)(b)
	Identify various methods by which student progress is to be measured. 33-5205 (3)(c)
	Include a provision by which students will be tested with the same standardized tests as other Idaho public school students. 33-5205 (3)(d)
	Include a provision that ensures the charter school shall be accredited as provided by rule of the Idaho State Board of Education. 33-5205 (3)(e) & 33-5210 (4)(b)
	Describe the governance structure of the charter school, including the person or entity that shall be legally accountable for the operation of the charter school and the process to be followed to ensure parental involvement. 33-5205 (3)(f)
	Outline the qualifications to be met by individuals employed by the charter school. Include a statement that all teachers and administrators will be on a written contract. 33-5204A (1), 33-5205 (3)(g), & 33-5206 (4)
	Include procedures to ensure health and safety of students and staff. 33-5205 (3)(h)
	Describe admission procedures, including provision for over-enrollment, which specify equitable selection processes for the initial year, as well as subsequent years of operation. In addition, include enrollment capacity of the charter school. 33-5205 (3)(i)
	Include a statement describing how waiting lists will be developed and renewed

Required Elements of a Charter Petition	
Petitions to establish public charter schools are required by law to contain certain information. These requirements are set forth in Section 33-5205(3), Idaho Code.	
<i>*denotes a recommended item but one that is not required to be included in the petition by law or rule.</i>	
	annually. 33-5205 (3)(j) and IDAPA 08.02.04, "Rules Governing Public Charter Schools"
	Describe the manner in which the annual audit of financial and programmatic operations is to be conducted. 33-5205 (3)(k), 33-5206 (7), & 33-5210 (3)
	<p>Outline procedures for suspension, expulsion and re-enrollment of students. Include a plan for denial of attendance to any student who is or has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A habitual truant • Incurable • Deemed by the board of trustees to be disruptive of school discipline or instructional effectiveness • Detrimental to the health and safety of the other students, or • Expelled from any other district <p>33-5205 (3)(l) and 33-210 and 33-5205(3)(l)</p>
	<p>Include a provision that ensures all staff members will be enrolled in and covered by all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Employee Retirement System (PERSI) • Federal Social Security • Unemployment Insurance/Worker's Compensation Insurance • Health Insurance <p>33-5205 (3)(m)</p>
	Include a public school attendance alternative for students residing within the attendance area who choose not to attend the charter school. 33-5205 (3)(n)
	Describe the transfer rights of any employee choosing to work in a charter school that is approved by the board of trustees of a school district, and the right of this employee to return to any non-charter school in the same district. 5205 (3)(o) & 33-1217
	Include a provision that ensures that the staff of the charter school shall be considered a separate unit for purposes of collective bargaining. 33-5205 (3)(p)
	<p>Outline provisions for how special education services will be provided: 33-5205 (3)(q)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification/Evaluation • Programming • Individual Education Plans (IEP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development Review Revision • Services • Discipline Policy • Budget • Transportation for special needs students (the charter school must provide transportation unless a special needs student is capable of getting to school in the same manner as other students)
	Describe the plan for working with parents who have students who are dually

Required Elements of a Charter Petition	
Petitions to establish public charter schools are required by law to contain certain information. These requirements are set forth in Section 33-5205(3), Idaho Code.	
<i>*denotes a recommended item but one that is not required to be included in the petition by law or rule.</i>	
	enrolled pursuant to Chapter 2, Title 33, Idaho Code. 33-5205 (3)(r) and 33-203
	Describe the manner in which citizens residing in the compact and contiguous attendance area of the charter school will be made aware of enrollment opportunities. 33-5205 (3)(s)
	Outline transportation services for students, including estimated first year cost. 33-5205 (3)(t) & 5208 (4)
	<p>Include a plan for termination of the charter by the board of directors, to include: 33-5205 (3)(u) & 5206 (8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of who is responsible for dissolution of the charter school • A description of how payment to creditors will be handled • A procedure for transferring all records of students with notice to parents of how to request a transfer of student records to a specific school, and • A plan for the disposal of the public charter school's assets.
	<p>Include information regarding the proposed operation and potential effects of the public charter school including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facilities to be utilized by the public charter school • The manner in which administrative services of the charter school are to be provided. • The potential civil liability effects upon the charter school and upon the district. 33-5205 (4)
	Include anticipated enrollment.
	*Include a provision that ensures all staff members will submit a criminal history check fingerprint card to the Office of Certification at the State Department of Education. 33-5210 (4)(d), 33-130, & 33-512 (15)
	Include procedures for students using or under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances. 33-210
	*Describe the manner by which Limited English Proficiency services will be provided. <i>Title III Federal Regulation, NCLB</i>
	*Describe the manner in which gifted and talented students will be served including a plan for identification and service.
	<p>*Outline provisions for Child Nutrition: <i>(Federally funded programs may have specific guidelines)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Lunch Program • Determining Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals • Verification Reporting and Recordkeeping
	*Include a provision describing the charter school's plan in the event it is ever identified as an "in need of improvement school" as outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act
	*Include a provision that ensures a policy of Internet safety for minors, including the operation of a technology protection measure with respect to any of its computers with Internet access that protects against access through such computers to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors. <i>Children's Internet Protection Act</i>

Required Elements of a Charter Petition	
Petitions to establish public charter schools are required by law to contain certain information. These requirements are set forth in Section 33-5205(3), Idaho Code.	
*denotes a recommended item but one that is not required to be included in the petition by law or rule.	
	*Include a student handbook that describes the charter school policies and procedures ensuring a student's parent or guardian has access to this handbook
	<p>*Include a detailed business plan outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business description • Marketing plan • Management plan • Resumes of the directors of the nonprofit corporation • Charter school's financial plan • Start-up budget with assumptions from • Three (3)-year operating budget from; and • First year month-by-month cash flow. <p>Note: The charter school's budget must be in the Idaho Financial Accounting Reporting Management System (IFARMS) format</p>

REQUIRED FORMAT FOR PETITIONS TO COMMISSION:

Details may be found in Rules Governing Thoroughness 08.03.01.401

	Cover Page
	Table of Contents
	Tab 1
	Articles of incorporation & signed bylaws 33-5204(1)
	Signatures and proof of qualification of not fewer than 30 qualified electors of the attendance area 33-5205(1)(a)
	Mission statement
	Tab 2: Proposed operation and potential effects of the public charter school including: 33-5205(4)
	Facilities
	Administrative services
	Potential civil liability
	Tab 3
	Educational program and goals; fulfillment of educational thoroughness standards 33-1612 & 33-5205(3)(a)
	Definition of “educated person” and how learning best occurs 33-5205(3)(a)
	Manner by which special education services will be provided 33-5205(3)(q)
	Plan for dual enrollment participation 33-203(7) & 33-5205(3)(r)
	Tab 4
	Measurable student educational standards 33-5205(3)(b)
	Method of measuring student progress 33-5205(3)(c)
	Provision by which students will receive standardized testing 33-5205(3)(d)
	Provision ensuring state accreditation of charter school 33-5205(3)(e) & IDAPA 08.02.02.140
	Provision re plan for improvement per NCLB
	Tab 5
	Description of governance structure 33-5205(3)(f)
	Process to ensure parental involvement 33-5205(3)(f)
	Plan for annual financial and programmatic audits 33-5205(3)(j)
	Tab 6
	Employee qualifications to be met 33-130 & 33-5205(3)(g)
	Health and safety procedures 33-5205(3)(h)
	Provision re PERSI, federal social security, unemployment insurance, and worker’s compensation insurance 33-5205(3)(m)
	Transfer rights of employees 33-5205(3)(o)
	Provision re staff as separate unit for purposes of collective bargaining 33-5205(3)(p)
	Statement re written contract for teachers and administrators 33-5206(4)
	Tab 7
	Admission procedures, including provision for over enrollment 33-5205(3)(i)
	Disciplinary procedures including suspension, expulsion, and reenrollment 33-5205(3)(l)

	Procedures for students using alcohol/controlled substances 33-210
	Public charter school attendance alternative 33-5205(3)(n)
	Process for public notification of enrollment opportunities 33-5205(3)(s)
	Plan for the requirements of Section 33-205, Idaho Code, for the denial of school attendance.
	Student handbook and procedure ensuring parental access to it
	Tab 8
	Business plan including: business description, marketing plan, management plan, resumes of directors, financial plan, start-up budget with assumptions form, three-year operating budget form, and first year month-by-month cash flow form. Note: budget must be in IFARMS format
	Proposal for transportation services 33-5208(4)
	Plan for school lunch program
	Tab 9: For virtual charter schools, brief description of how charter school meets definition of a public virtual charter school 33-5202A(6)
	Tab 10
	Description of business arrangements and partnerships, including lease agreements
	Additional information desired by petitioners
	Plan for termination including identification of person responsible for dissolution, disposal of assets, handling of payment to creditors, and transfer of student records 33-5205(3)(u)

Warning! Please be advised that the following documents are samples only. The authors of this publication are providing samples to guide the development of your own petition and bylaws, but it is important to stress that every founding group should carefully consider the implications of every element of the charter petition and charter bylaws before submitting them to the authorizer. A charter petition is a contract, which if approved, is legally binding. Using text from another groups' petition or copying another groups' bylaws without first making sure that the contents fit with what your group is planning could put your group at risk programmatically, legally, and organizationally. Risks include not being able to defend the petition at a hearing, being held accountable by an authorizer for an element of the petition or bylaws that you did not intend to include, having a budget that doesn't fit with your school demographics (size, age served, and teacher expertise), or other elements. Please make sure your group carefully considers each element as you develop your petition and bylaws and that you consult operating charter schools, the State Department of Education, and resource centers about questions you might have.

Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc.

Authorized representative:

Lee Hannah, Chairman
23412 Lansing Lane
Middleton, ID 83644
Phone: 585-6544
Fax: 585-6562
Email: lee.hannah@safelink.net

Table of Contents

TAB 1: ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION, BY-LAWS, SIGNATURES, AND MISSION STATEMENT	7
ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION.....	7
ARTICLE 1: Name.....	7
ARTICLE 2: Purposes and Powers.....	7
ARTICLE 3: Registered Office and Agent	7
ARTICLE 4: Directors.....	7
ARTICLE 5: Incorporators	8
ARTICLE 6: Mailing Address.....	8
ARTICLE 7: Membership	8
ARTICLE 8: Dissolution and Distribution	8
ARTICLE 9: Non-stock Corporation	8
ARTICLE 10: Bylaws	8
ARTICLE 11: Amendment to Articles	8
BYLAWS OF VISION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL OF MIDDLETON, INC. AN IDAHO NONPROFIT CORPORATION	9
ARTICLE 1: Offices	9
ARTICLE 2: Purpose	9
ARTICLE 3: No Members.....	9
ARTICLE 4: Board of Directors.....	10
ARTICLE 5: Board Meetings	13
ARTICLE 6: Officers and Duties	13
ARTICLE 7: Fiscal Affairs.....	15
ARTICLE 8: Notices	15
ARTICLE 9: Dissolution.....	15

ARTICLE 10: Amendments.....	16
Certificate of Bylaws.....	16
Signatures of qualified electors.....	17
Mission Statement	17
 TAB 2: PROPOSED OPERATION AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF THE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL.....	 19
Target Student Population	19
Distinguishing Features	19
Core Values	20
School Status	20
Facilities to be utilized.....	20
Potential Impact on Middleton School District.....	21
Administrative Services	21
Civil Liability	21
Types of Insurance	22
 TAB 3: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND GOALS	 23
Core Educational Philosophy	23
A 21 st century education.....	24
Thoroughness Standards (Idaho Code 33-1612)	24
Standard a. A safe environment conducive to learning is provided.	24
Standard b. Educators are empowered to maintain classroom discipline.	24
Standard c. The basic values of honesty, self-discipline, unselfishness, respect for authority, and the central importance of work are emphasized.....	25
Standard d. The skills necessary to communicate effectively are taught.	25
Standard e. A basic curriculum necessary to enable students to enter academic or professional-technical post-secondary educational programs is provided.	25
Standard f. The skills necessary for the students to enter the workforce are taught.	26
Standard g. The students are introduced to current technology.....	27
Standard h. The importance of students acquiring the skills to enable them to be responsible citizens of their homes, schools, and communities is emphasized.....	27
Instructional Methods.....	27
Curriculum Overview	28

Curriculum Development and Approval	30
Textbooks	30
Educational Programs and Services.....	30
Special Needs Students	30
Other Special Needs Student Services	32
Dual Enrollment.....	32
Academic Freedom, Controversial Issues, and Religion	32
TAB 4: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS.....	33
Measurable Student Standards	33
Student Assessment.....	34
Student Educational Standards.....	34
Accreditation	35
Improvement Planning	35
Improvement of Student Learning.....	35
TAB 5: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE.....	37
Organizing Group.....	37
Board of Directors.....	37
Parental Participation	39
Audit of Programmatic Operations	40
Dispute Resolution	40
TAB 6: EMPLOYEES OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL	41
Employee Qualifications	41
Professional Opportunities	41
Background Checks	41
Targeted Staff Size.....	41

Teacher Certification	42
Employee Benefits	42
Status of Vision Charter School Employees	42
Experience	42
Collective Bargaining	42
Staff Development.....	42
Health and Safety	43
TAB 7: ADMISSION PROCEDURES.....	44
Admission Procedures	44
Public School Attendance Alternative	44
Over-Enrollment Procedures	44
Non-Discrimination	45
Minimum Enrollment.....	45
Attendance Requirements.....	46
Grading, Homework, and Promotion.....	47
Corrective Action	47
Student Activities.....	47
Student Fees.....	47
Student Rights and Responsibilities.....	47
TAB 8: BUSINESS PLAN	49
Business Description	49
Marketing Plan.....	49
Facility Description	49
Instructional Arrangements	49
Day-to-Day Operations	50
Expenditures	51

Transportation.....	51
Food Service.....	51
Resumes	51
TAB 10: TERMINATION OR DISSOLUTION.....	62
Complaint Process.....	62
School Records.....	62
IRS Regulations.....	62
Use of District Facilities	62
Inspection Reports.....	63
State Compliance	63
Right to Evaluate Contract Compliance.....	63
Amending the Contract	63
Termination or Non-renewal	63
Dissolution.....	64
Proof of Attendance at the Petitioner’s Workshop	64
Policies and Procedures	64

TAB 1: Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, Signatures, and Mission Statement

Articles of Incorporation

The undersigned, in order to form a Non-Profit Corporation under the provisions of Title 30, Chapter 3, Idaho Code, submits the following articles of incorporation to the Secretary of the State.

ARTICLE 1: Name

The name of the corporation shall be: Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc.

ARTICLE 2: Purposes and Powers

This Corporation is organized for the basic purpose to do all things reasonable and proper in the operation of a nonprofit charter school within the state of Idaho and to deal generally therein. This corporation is organized exclusively for educational purposes within the meaning of IRC Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from Federal Income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

This corporation is a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the state of Idaho, and is not formed for pecuniary profit. No part of the income or assets of the corporation are distributable to or for the benefit of its Incorporators, Directors, or Officers, except to the extent permissible by law. The Corporation shall have all powers allowed by law, including, without limitation, those powers described in Section 30-2-24 of the Idaho Code, as amended and supplemented.

ARTICLE 3: Registered Office and Agent

The address of the registered office of the Corporation is 23640 Lansing Lane, Middleton, Idaho 83644, and the name of its initial registered agent is Michelle R. Lambright.

ARTICLE 4: Directors

The number of directors that shall constitute the Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be fixed by the Bylaws, but in any event shall not be less than five (5) and no more than seven (7). The number of directors constituting the initial Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be five (5) and the names and addresses of these persons who are to serve as directors until their successors are elected and shall qualify are:

Jody Benson 14460 Sand Hollow Road, Caldwell, ID 83607
Michelle R. Lambright 23640 Lansing Lane, Middleton, ID 83644
Kamille Crawford 16266 Mink Rd, Caldwell, ID 83607

Tracie Wood 14450 Chukar St., Caldwell, Idaho 83607

ARTICLE 5: Incorporators

The name and address of the initial incorporator is Michelle R. Lambright 23640 Lansing Lane, Middleton, ID 83644.

ARTICLE 6: Mailing Address

The mailing address of the corporation shall be 23640 Lansing Lane, Middleton, ID 83644.

ARTICLE 7: Membership

The corporation shall have no members and shall exist perpetually or until dissolved according to law.

ARTICLE 8: Dissolution and Distribution

Upon the dissolution of the Corporation the assets of the Corporation shall be distributed to creditors pursuant to Sections 30-3-114 and 30-3-115 of the Idaho Code. Upon winding up and dissolution of this corporation, and paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the corporation, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the corporation, the remaining assets shall be distributed to the Idaho Public Charter School Commission, Boise, Idaho.

ARTICLE 9: Non-stock Corporation

The corporation shall not issue certificates of stock and no dividends or pecuniary profits shall be declared or paid to the Incorporators and Directors thereof.

ARTICLE 10: Bylaws

Provisions for the regulation for the internal affairs of the corporation shall be set forth in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE 11: Amendment to Articles

These Articles may be amended only upon the unanimous consent of the Directors.

Revised effective the 23rd day of November 2005.

Incorporators:

Jody Benson

Michelle R. Lambright

Bylaws of Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc. An Idaho Nonprofit Corporation

ARTICLE 1: Offices

Section 1.1 Offices

The Corporation's principal office shall be fixed and located in the County of Canyon, State of Idaho as the Board of Directors ("Board") shall determine. The Board is granted full power and authority to change the principal office from one location to another within the County of Canyon, State of Idaho.

ARTICLE 2: Purpose

Section 2.1 Purpose

The Corporation is organized exclusively for educational purposes within the meaning Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or the corresponding provisions of any future Federal income tax code.

Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws to the contrary, the Corporation shall not carry on any activities not permitted of:

- (a) a corporation exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provisions of any future Federal income tax code, or
- (b) a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or the corresponding provisions of any future Federal income tax code.

ARTICLE 3: No Members

Section 3.1 No Members

The Corporation shall have no members. Any action which would otherwise by law require approval by a majority of all members or approval by the members shall require only approval of the Board. All rights, which would otherwise by law vest in the members, shall vest in the Board.

Section 3.2 Associates

Nothing in the Article 3 shall be construed to limit the Corporation's right to refer to persons associated with it as "members" even though such persons are not members, and no such reference by the Corporation shall render anyone a member within the meaning of Section 30-3-34 of the Idaho Nonprofit Corporation Act. Such individuals may originate and take part in the discussion of any subject that may properly come before any meeting of the Board, but may not vote.

ARTICLE 4: Board of Directors

Section 4.1 Board of Directors

The number of Directors constituting the Board of the Corporation shall be not less than five (5) or more than seven (7) Directors. The function of the Board can be described as policy making, advising and evaluating. The Board shall have the further duty of directing the financial means by which the educational program is conducted. They shall also ensure that the community be informed of the needs, purposes, values and status of the charter school.

Section 4.2 Powers of the Board of Directors

The Board, as a board, shall have the full power and duty to manage and oversee the operation of the Corporation's business and to pledge the credit, assets and property of said Corporation when necessary to facilitate the efficient operation thereof. Authority is given to the Charter School Board of Directors by the State of Idaho as provided in the "Public Charter Schools Act of 1998." (I.C. 33-5201)

Section 4.3 Election of Directors

- (a) During the initial year of operation, the Board shall be comprised of the Directors nominated and appointed by the organizing members and founders of Vision Charter School. One additional non-voting member may be appointed by the Public Charter School Commission. Two additional Directors may be added at the discretion of the Directors, as established with a two-thirds majority vote.
- (b) After the initial year of operation, Directors shall be elected in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.3 (c).
- (c) After the initial year of operation, Directors will be elected to fill vacancies on the Board by the process outlined below;
 - i. All Board of Directors applicants will be required to fill out a questionnaire.
 - ii. All Board of Directors applicants will be required to go through a screening process, overseen by a committee that is nominated by the Charter School Board of Directors. The committee shall consist of staff members, members of the Parent Faculty Association (PFA) Executive Committee and members of the Board of Directors.
 - iii. The committee will then nominate to the Charter School Board of Directors, candidates for each open position.
 - iv. No more than three candidates per position shall be nominated.
 - v. Stakeholders of the school will then be asked to vote on the candidates. A stakeholder of the school is defined as one or more of the following; a parent of a child attending the school; staff members or employees of Vision Charter School; Vision Charter School board members and founders of the Charter School that signed the charter petition.
 - vi. Vision Charter School Board of Directors has final authority over all ballots.

- vii. The time, date and location of all elections will be advertised by Vision Charter School using, but not limited to, the following methods; public service announcements in newspapers and sending notification home with students.
- viii. Voting on board member elections can be done in person or via absentee ballot. Absentee ballots are valid only if person is named on the Stakeholder list. The stakeholder list consists of; parents of students attending the school; staff members or employees of Vision Charter School; Vision Charter School board members and founders of the Charter School that signed the charter petition. The cut-off for being listed as a stakeholder is the final day of school each year.

Section 4.4 Terms

- (a) Directors shall be elected or appointed to a two (2) year term of office. However, during the initial year of operation one Director shall be selected by the founders of the charter school for a term of only one (1) year; two Directors will be appointed for a term of two (2) years and two Directors will be appointed for a term of three (3) years.
- (b) Each Director shall serve until the stakeholders at the annual meeting of the Corporation duly elect his/her successor.

Section 4.5 Resignation and Removal

Subject to the provisions of Section 30-3-69 of the Idaho Nonprofit Public Corporation Act, any Director may resign effective upon giving written notice to the Chairman of the Board, or the Secretary of the Board, unless the notice specifies a later effective time. If the resignation is effective at a future time, a successor may be selected before such time, to take office when the resignation becomes effective. A director may be removed from office by a vote of the directors.

Section 4.6 Vacancies

- (a) A Board vacancy or vacancies shall be deemed to exist if any Director dies, resigns, or is removed, or if the authorized number of Directors is increased.
- (b) The Board may declare vacant the office of any director who has been convicted of a felony, or has been found to have breached any duty arising under Article 30-3-85 of the Idaho Nonprofit Public Corporation Act or to be of unsound mind, by any court of competent jurisdiction, or has failed to attend four (4) or more meetings of the Board in any calendar year.
- (c) Removal of a Director for one or more of the reasons listed in Section 4.6(b) above may be initiated by any member of the Board or by a majority vote petition of the Stakeholders. The Board shall hold a public meeting within ten (10) school attendance days of receiving such a request or petition. Such meeting shall be conducted with regard for the reasonable due process rights of all parties and in public, except where either the Board or the Director whose removal is sought

requests a closed session. Where a closed session is held, the final action of the Board shall be taken in public.

- (d) A vacancy on the Board may be filled by a majority vote of the remaining Directors, although less than a quorum. Each Director so elected shall hold office until the next annual meeting of the Corporation.
- (e) No reduction of the authorized number of Directors shall have the effect of removing any Director prior to the expiration of the Director's term of office.

Section 4.7 Compensation of Directors

Directors shall not receive any compensation for their services; however, the Directors may approve the reimbursement of a Director's actual and necessary expenses incurred in the conduct of the Corporation's business. The Corporation shall carry liability insurance covering the Corporation's business.

Section 4.8 Employees

The Board shall have the power to hire employees of the Corporation whose duties shall be specified by the Board.

Section 4.9 Voting

Voting by the Board shall be in person and no proxy voting on the Board may occur. Tie votes will be broken by the Chairman of the Board.

Section 4.10 Quorum

A quorum consisting of a majority or more of the then current Directors must be assembled to vote and conduct business.

Section 4.11 Rights of Inspection

Every Director has the right to inspect and copy all books, records and documents of every kind and to inspect the physical properties of the Corporation provided such inspection is conducted at a reasonable time after reasonable notice, and provided that such right of inspection and copying is subject to the Corporation's obligations to maintain the confidentiality of certain books, records and documents under any applicable federal, state or local law.

ARTICLE 5: Board Meetings

Section 5.1 Place of Meeting

The place of all meetings of the Directors shall be the principal office of the Corporation in the County of Canyon, Idaho, or at such other place as shall be determined from time to time by the Board; and the place at which such meetings shall be held shall be stated in the notice and call of meeting. No change in the place of meeting shall be made within three (3) days before the day on which an election of directors is to be held.

Section 5.2 Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Directors of the Corporation for the election of Directors and Officers to succeed those whose terms expire and for the transaction of other business as may properly come before the meeting, shall be held each year during the first full week of June, at the principal office of the Corporation in the County of Canyon, Idaho. If the annual meeting of the Directors be not held as herein prescribed, the election of Directors and Officers may be held at any meeting called thereafter, pursuant to these Bylaws.

Section 5.3 Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings of the Directors of the Corporation will not be mandatory, but will be scheduled for the first Tuesday of each month if a Director sees the need to have a meeting during the month.

Section 5.4 Notice of Meeting

Notice of the time and place of the annual meeting of the Directors or of any monthly meetings of the Directors shall not be given by mailing written or printed notice of the same but shall be posted at the school bulletin board and in three other locations within the city of Middleton Idaho at least three (3) days prior to the meeting. Locations might include city hall, Ridley's, and the Middleton Public Library.

ARTICLE 6: Officers and Duties

Section 6.1 Officers

The Officers of the Corporation shall be Chairman of the Board, Vice Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. Any number of offices may be held by the same person, except that neither the Secretary nor the Treasurer may serve concurrently as the Chairman of the Board. Officers of the Corporation shall also be Directors of the Corporation. The Officers shall be elected each year at the annual meeting by the Board and serve a one (1) year term.

Section 6.2 Chairman of the Board

The Chairman of the Board is the general manager and chief executive officer of the Corporation and has, subject to the control of the Board, general supervision, direction and control of the business of the Corporation. The Chairman of the Board shall preside at all meetings of the Board. The Chairman of the Board has the general management powers and duties usually vested in the office of President and General Manager of a

corporation as well as such other powers and duties as may be prescribed from time to time by the Board.

Section 6.3 Vice Chairman

In the absence or disability of the Chairman of the Board, the Vice Chairman will perform all the duties of the Chairman of the Board and, when so acting, shall have all the powers of, and be subject to all the restrictions upon, the Chairman of the Board. The Vice Chairman shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as the Board may prescribe from time to time.

Section 6.4 Secretary

- (a) The Secretary shall keep or cause to be kept, at the principal office or such other place as the Board may order, a book of minutes of all meetings of the Board and its committees, including the following information for all such meetings: the time and place of holding; whether regular or special; if special, how authorized; the notice thereof given; the names of those present and absent, and the proceedings thereof. The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, at the principal office in the State of Idaho the original or a copy of the Corporation's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, as amended to date, and a register showing the names of all Directors and their respective addresses.
- (b) The Secretary shall give, or cause to be given, notice of all meetings of the Board and any committees thereof required by these Bylaws or by law to be given, and shall distribute the minutes of meetings of the Board to all its members promptly after the meetings; shall see that all reports, statements and other documents required by law are properly kept or filed, except to the extent the same are to be kept or filed by the Treasurer; and shall have such other powers and perform such duties as may be prescribed from time to time by the Board.

Section 6.5 Treasurer

- (a) The Treasurer of the Corporation shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of the Corporation, including accounts of its assets, liabilities, receipts and disbursements. The books of account shall at all times be open to inspection by any Board member.
- (b) The Treasurer shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, all money and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the Corporation with such depositories as may be designated from time to time by the Board. The Treasurer shall disburse the funds of the Corporation as may be ordered by the Board, and shall render to the Board, upon request, an account of all transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the Corporation. The Treasurer shall present an operating statement and report, since the last preceding regular Board meeting, to the Board at all regular meetings. The Treasurer shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed from time to time by the Board.

Section 6.6 Removal

Any Officer may be removed, either with or without cause, by a majority of the Directors then in office.

Section 6.7 Vacancies

A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or any other cause shall be filled in the manner prescribed in these Bylaws for regular election or appointment to such office, provided that such vacancies shall be filled as they occur and not on an annual basis.

ARTICLE 7: Fiscal Affairs*Section 7.1 Fiscal Year*

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall be from July 1st to June 30th.

ARTICLE 8: Notices*Section 8.1 Manner of Giving Notice*

Whenever provisions of any statute or these Bylaws require notice to be given to any Director, Officer or other individual, they shall not be construed to mean personal notice. Such notice shall be given in writing and placed on the bulletin board of the Corporation in sufficient amount of time prior to the meeting or action to be taken as required by Statute, the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws; said notice need not be given individually and may be given in one notice document.

Section 8.2 Waiver

A waiver of any notice in writing, signed by a Director or Officer, whether before or after the time stated in said waiver for holding a meeting, or presence at any such meeting, shall be deemed equivalent to a notice required to be given to any Director, or individual.

ARTICLE 9: Dissolution*Section 9.1 Dissolution*

Upon dissolution of the Corporation, assets shall be distributed to creditors pursuant to Sections 30-3-114 and 30-3-115 of the Idaho Code. All remaining assets will be distributed the Idaho Public Charter School Commission, Boise, Idaho.

ARTICLE 10: Amendments*Section 10.1 Bylaws*

New Bylaws may be adopted or these Bylaws may be amended or repealed by a majority vote of the Board. Whenever any amendment or new Bylaws are adopted, copies shall be placed in the Book of Bylaws with the original Bylaws, and immediately after them, and shall not take effect until so copied. If any Bylaws are repealed, the fact of repeal with the date of the meeting at which the repeal was enacted must be stated in the book and until so stated, the repeal must not take effect. Whenever any provision of the Bylaws is either amended or repealed, a marginal note shall be made thereon indicating the place or page where the amendment or repeal may be found.

Certificate of Bylaws

I certify that I am the initial agent of Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc., an Idaho Nonprofit Corporation, and that the foregoing Bylaws, constitute the Bylaws of such corporation. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have signed my name to this Certificate on

_____ (date).

Michelle R. Lambright, CPA

Signatures of qualified electors

Copies of the signatures are included behind Tab 10.

Mission Statement

The mission of Vision Charter School is to provide a classical education to all students in an effort to produce well-educated, respectful citizen leaders. A classical education is one which utilizes concepts and facts from History, Language Arts, Literature, Science, Mathematics, Fine Arts, and Social Studies to impart skills in reasoning, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Classical education depends on a three-part process of training the mind. First students spend time learning facts, systematically laying the foundations for advanced study. Then, students learn to think through arguments and finally, they learn to express themselves. This classical pattern is called the trivium. The skills learned in this classical education are mandatory in today's changing society.

The Vision Charter School plans to help students learn how to think and share ideas through shared inquiry. Shared inquiry is a group effort that strengthens critical thinking skills, promotes reading and the appreciation of literature, and provides all people with an instrument for social engagement and lifelong learning.

Leaders are identified by their moral character and intellectual qualities. Vision Charter School will nurture the intellectual capacity of our students with a foundation in reading and writing. Problem-solving and cognitive development will be heightened through the teaching of mathematics and the scientific method. These skills will be enhanced with application to real-world problems. Many studies have suggested that early musical training can increase cognitive development in abstract thinking and logical skills. Through the use of a second language and music from cultures around the world, we will enhance student understanding of different historical and cultural settings. We will also study local, state, regional, and national heritage and culture to promote greater understanding and appreciation of our nation and its diverse population.

As part of our mission we will seek to help our students develop the following academic and personal habits:

- curiosity;
- lifelong learning;
- clear oral and written communication;
- creative thinking;
- logical thinking and the ability to make informed judgments;
- effective use of technology as a tool;
- adaptability to new situations and new information;
- problem-solving skills;
- the ability to find, select, evaluate, organize, and use information from various sources;
- the ability to make easy and flexible connections among various disciplines

- of thought; and
- respecting others' individuality and creativity, as well as one's own, while seeking to work within teams to create common solutions.

In addition, we hope to help them develop the following personal habits and actions:

- accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions;
- academic honesty and the ability to face challenges with courage and integrity;
- a healthy lifestyle;
- empathy and courtesy for others and respect for differences among people and cultures;
- self-confidence and willingness to risk setbacks in order to learn;
- concentration and perseverance;
- managing time in a responsible manner;
- seeking a fair share of the workload; and
- working cooperatively with others, which includes the ability to listen, share opinions, negotiate, compromise, and help a group reach consensus.

TAB 2: Proposed Operation and Potential Effects of the Public Charter School

Target Student Population

Vision Charter School will open in the Fall of 2006 with grades Kindergarten through 7th. Each year thereafter, we plan to add one additional grade (i.e. in Year 2 we will add 8th grade). Expansion in Year 2 and beyond will be at the discretion of the Governing Board of Directors based on enrollment demand and adequate finances. Class size will range from 28 to 33 students. Our long-term goal is to add one grade per year until the school serves the entire kindergarten through 12th grade population.

Distinguishing Features

The school will be distinguished by five features: an **Arts and Sciences** emphasis, character and leadership development, a small environment for the students, study in a second language, and music training. These five features distinguish our program and establish the basis for offering a unique learning program and environment.

Arts and Sciences - We desire to instill in our students a love of literature, fine arts, and scientific inquiry. Success will be defined as a student with fundamental knowledge of Language Arts, Fine Arts, and Science. This education will allow students to pursue any life career with confidence. Career opportunities in science, medicine, and mathematics-based jobs, such as engineering, are on the rise and students prepared to take advantage of these careers through a fundamental understanding of these subjects will have the knowledge and reasoning skills necessary for success.

Character and Leadership Development - We intend to reprioritize character development as a fundamental purpose of education. This will generally be accomplished by embracing a child centered educational model built on high expectations for both student behavior and academic endeavor. We will provide a comprehensive plan for character education that taps into each child's innate need to know boundaries, while protecting each child's dignity. The heart of character education curriculum is simply being kind to one another. The result of character education is a school free of teasing, taunting, bullying, negative peer pressure and students who help create a kinder community around them, whether at school, at home or in their neighborhoods.

Small School Environment - Not all students thrive in schools with large student populations. Our small school offers a safe and small alternative for these students. Our students and faculty will come to know each other on a more personal basis.

Music Training - A number of studies have found a strong correlation between cognitive development and musical training. Further studies have shown that the best time to boost intellectual development through music is between the ages of two and ten. Therefore, we will create a keyboard lab within the first two years of the inception of Vision Charter School where students will learn the basics of playing the keyboard. In addition, a music

curriculum for older students will focus on the development of fundamental musician skills, while also exposing students to local musical heritage and culture.

Second Language – Vision Charter School recognizes the importance of a second language to the scholastic development and future careers of students. Knowledge of a second language will become increasingly important to effective leadership in the 21st century. In addition, research has suggested that knowledge of a second language may boost English proficiency, improve memory and self-discipline, and enhance verbal and problem-solving skills. The school intends to expose students from kindergarten onwards to a second language, with a primary emphasis on the Spanish language. Initially, parents who are fluent speakers of Spanish will be invited on at least a bi-weekly basis and under the direct supervision of a Highly Qualified Teacher, will assist with Spanish classes at the school. These parent assistants will utilize existing Spanish language curricula as a framework for lessons provided to each grade. This will not only achieve our goal of exposing student to a second language, but will also encourage more parental involvement within the school. Additional languages may be added at the discretion of the Board of Directors based on demand and adequate finances.

An Enriched Curriculum For All Students – While gifted and talented students will be identified in accordance with Idaho Code (33.2001, 33.2003, IDAPA 08.02.03.999), we will offer an enriched gifted and talented curriculum for ALL students. Teachers, with the help of educational assistants and a team of parent volunteers will be engaged in the act of direct teaching throughout the day, using every method available to them (tactile, visual, kinesthetic, auditory, group and independent approaches). By taking into account and addressing the varying developmental rates and learning modalities of the student population, it is possible through this direct-teaching and monitoring approach to keep the curricula challenging and the expectations for learning high. The result is above grade level performance, high standardized-test scores, and extraordinary levels of parent and student satisfaction, and meeting the needs of identified gifted and talented students.

Core Values

Vision Charter School's core values are reflected in its philosophy and mission statement. It is important for students to be challenged, to be taught as individuals, and to learn in a safe environment.

School Status

Vision Charter School will be a public charter school. It will not be a religious school, a conversion of a private or parochial school, or a school operated for profit.

Facilities to be utilized

Vision Charter School has entered into an agreement with Woodland Investments to lease 15 acres of farmland located at the corner of Middleton Road and Busy Bee Road. We will locate 5 portable units on the site. Our engineer and architect are working with the

City of Middleton and the property owners to have city sewer and water extended to the property. It is expected to be on city sewer and water by early Summer of 2006. We are in consultation with the city over permits and estimated expenses for hooking up the portable units. We have set aside \$75,000 for portable set-up and connection to sewer, water, and electricity. aside \$75,000 for portable set-up and connection to sewer, water, and electricity.

Potential Impact on Middleton School District

We are aware that, because of an emergency levy in place in the district, opening the charter school may have some financial impact on the school district. This impact will likely be offset by the tremendous growth in the Middleton School District. This growth should minimize the impact of taking 230 students out of the district. Currently the Middleton School District is growing at between 150 and 200 students per year. This is expected to increase slightly as the population of Middleton increases. We believe that the impact of the charter school will be neutral by year 2 and that the district will continue to grow despite the charter school taking an additional 33 students from the district each year over the next 5 years.

Administrative Services

Administrative services for the school will be provided by the Principal with support from the Board of Directors. The Board Treasurer is also a CPA and has agreed to provide accounting services to the school for the first three years of operation. We will hire a full-time secretary who will assist with handling paperwork and required reporting for the school. A part-time administrative assistant may be added as needed. An independent audit will be performed each year by an outside auditor (not affiliated with Vision Charter School). Board members and founding family members will be utilized according to their background and experience, which includes prior teaching experience, grant writing expertise, and civil engineering.

Civil Liability

To the fullest extent permitted by law, Vision Charter School agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the state of Idaho, the Idaho Public Charter School Commission, the Middleton School District, or any other sending districts, and their officers, directors, agents, or employees from and against all claims, damages, losses and expenses for wrongful acts, including but not limited to attorneys' fees, arising out of or resulting from any action of the school, provided that such claim, damage, loss or expense (a) is attributable to bodily injury, sickness, disease or death, or to injury or to destruction of tangible property including the loss of use resulting there from; and (b) is issued in whole or in part by any negligent act or omission of the school, any contractor of the school, or anyone directly or indirectly employed by any of them who may be liable, regardless of whether or not it is caused in part by a party indemnified hereunder. Such obligation will not be construed to negate, abridge, or otherwise reduce any other right or obligation of

indemnity, which would otherwise exist as to any party or person, described in this paragraph. No host, or receiving district, will be held liable for damages in an action to recover for bodily injury, personal injury, or property damage arising out of the establishment or operation of the school.

The Idaho State Board of Education and the Idaho Public Charter School Commission shall have no liability for the acts, omissions, debts or other obligations of any charter schools, except as may be provided in an agreement or contract between the ~~District~~ state and Vision Charter School.

Types of Insurance

Vision Charter School will procure and maintain a policy of general liability insurance in the amount required by state law and errors and omissions insurance with limits not less than one million dollars. Insurance companies who have and maintain a rating of “A” according to the A.M. Best Company will provide insurance. Potential insurance companies in Idaho who meet this standard include, but may not be limited to, Farmer’s Insurance, Farm Bureau, Woodsman, Regence Blue Shield of Idaho, Blue Cross of Idaho, State Farm, Primary Care of Idaho, and the Principal Group Insurance. Vision Charter School will have the same role as a public school in matters of civil liability. The appropriate insurance and legal waivers of all district liability will be obtained as required of other nonprofit users of district resources and facilities. Liability and property insurance will be similar to the coverage purchased by the district. A copy of the proof of insurance will be given to the Public Charter School Commission each time it is renewed to insure continuous coverage.

The Vision Charter School will provide a list of all other types and amounts of insurance required prior to the opening of the school.

TAB 3: Educational Program and Goals

Core Educational Philosophy

No matter how skilled the teacher, or elaborate the classroom, learning takes place in the mind of the student. The ideal educational environment, therefore, is the one that stimulates and engages the mind of the student. The core educational philosophy of Vision Charter School is grounded in the belief that a highly challenging content in a safe environment creates the setting for accelerated learning. Vision Charter School's core educational philosophy is that learning occurs when:

- learners construct meaning;
- learners see the connection between what they learn and the real world;
- learners are actively engaged in purposeful tasks;
- activities are integrated and meaningful;
- learners work individually and as members of a group;
- learners work side by side with community members to develop solutions and opinions on issues that can be presented to local policy makers;
- learners are expected and encouraged to learn;
- learners internalize that what they learn and do in school makes a positive change in the community;
- challenged learners have an individual plan, and support is an intrinsic part of the educational program;
- learners are supported with teachers, mentors, and advocates;
- all learners have advanced learning opportunities; and
- learners see themselves as part of the community and find ways to serve the community.

Vision Charter School represents a partnership among its students, parents, faculty, administration, and staff. The Vision Charter School is committed to the concept that each child has the right to come to school without fear of taunting, teasing, or violence. Parents have the right to expect a school to provide a safe, kind environment for their children, but also have a responsibility to ensure that their child understands the standards and expectations of behavior that is expected by the school. Teachers have the right to teach in an orderly environment without fear of violence. We strongly believe that a kind environment should be extended through the potentially tumultuous middle school years.

We draw not only on time-honored practices, but also on many valuable insights into childhood cognitive and developmental processes realized in recent decades. Moreover, we place strong emphasis on the relationship between the school and the home, recognizing the critical role of parents in fostering children's education.

Above all else, we see ourselves as allies of the family, reinforcing parents' efforts to guide the intellectual, emotional, and moral development of their children. By providing and enforcing moral and ethical standards, the school prepares its students to accept the

privileges and responsibilities of citizenship. Every child is capable of achieving his potential to the fullest extent when afforded respect, fairness, kindness, discipline, and appropriate instruction.

A 21st century education

Vision Charter School intends to meet the goal of producing students who possess the academic and personal habits and attitudes desired of an educated citizen in the 21st century. Goal attainment will be monitored by quarterly student assessment and staff professional development. Student enrollment will be small, with generally one class in each grade so that students move up together. The receiving teacher will have intimate knowledge of what has been taught and which students struggle with which concepts. The school will know if it accomplishes these goals by the continuing success of its students and by student scores on statewide evaluation tools.

Thoroughness Standards (Idaho Code 33-1612)

Vision Charter School will fulfill the thoroughness standards identified in Idaho Code. It has been established that a thorough system of public schools in Idaho is one in which the following standards are met:

Standard a. A safe environment conducive to learning is provided.

Goal: Maintain a positive and safe teaching and learning climate. Every student has the right to attend a school that encourages positive and productive learning, provides a safe and orderly environment, and promotes student respect for themselves and others.

Objectives: Vision Charter School will:

1. Develop guidelines for physical safety. These guidelines will include, but not be limited to, the procedures for fire drills, reporting unsafe equipment, methods for checking students in and out of school, notification of parents' rights, and staff monitoring responsibilities.
2. Provide a facility and adopt policies that meet all required city, state, and federal health, accessibility, safety, fire, and building codes for public schools.
3. Establish, publish, and enforce policies that define acceptable and unacceptable behavior, including zero tolerance for weapons, violence, gangs, and use or sale of alcohol and drugs.
4. Create an environment that encourages parents and other adults to visit the school and participate in the school's activities.

Standard b. Educators are empowered to maintain classroom discipline.

Goal: Create a positive teaching and learning environment with an emphasis on high expectations of behavior and performance.

Objectives: Vision Charter School will:

1. Adapt the policies into a student handbook providing a code of conduct including clear expectations and consequences for unacceptable behavior.
2. There will be school-wide process for teachers to handle minor and major infractions in the classroom setting.
3. Teach appropriate behaviors and foster responsible decision-making skills.
4. Establish and maintain consistent rules aligned throughout the school.

Standard c. The basic values of honesty, self-discipline, unselfishness, respect for authority, and the central importance of work are emphasized.

Goal: Offer opportunities for students to develop and express exemplary character traits in concert with the overall educational program.

Objectives: Vision Charter School will:

1. Utilize the general philosophy of the character education program to instill appropriate values.
2. Emphasize the importance of adults modeling important values at school.
3. Help students build personal bonds and carry out responsibilities to one another and to the faculty and staff.
4. Develop a sense of community and service within the school, and between the school and the larger community. Community service instills a sense of individual, social, and civic responsibility and enables the student to use newly found knowledge to solve community problems.

Standard d. The skills necessary to communicate effectively are taught.

Goal: Teach students a range of effective communication skills appropriate for the 21st century.

Objectives: Vision Charter School will:

1. Emphasize meaningful language experience in the language arts, enhanced by dramatization, memorization and a foreign language.
2. Provide access to computers to teach students basic computer skills and, in the older grades, appropriate communication through technology (via e-mail and the Internet).
3. Provide instruction in a foreign language. Knowledge of a second language is essential in many occupations. In addition, knowledge of a second language will boost English proficiency, improve memory and self-discipline, and enhance verbal and problem-solving skills.

Standard e. A basic curriculum necessary to enable students to enter academic or professional-technical post-secondary educational programs is provided.

Goal: Develop an educated citizenry for the 21st century through a dynamic, interactive academic program where student capabilities rather than textbooks drive pacing. Students

must be well grounded in the basics such as reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Objectives: Vision Charter School will:

1. Use the Idaho State Standards as a starting point to be enhanced by unifying themes and other creative methods.
2. Use a variety of methods to ensure student learning, including but not limited to: Spalding (phonics); CORE (reading/ spelling research); 6-Traits (writing); the Shurley method (English); teaching of mathematics through direct instruction, mathematics manipulative and relevant activities; computation and mathematics for homework; hands-on experimentation for science learning; and emphasis on community service in social studies.
3. Develop a personalized learning goal for each student. Together, the student, parents and educator will consider the student's strengths and weaknesses. Faster students will continuously be presented with new challenges. Learners who need more time will benefit from extra help, multiple methods and different environments.
4. Emphasize Fine and Language Arts and the Scientific Method.
5. Health knowledge and physical activity are very important for students. A comprehensive health curriculum will be taught, as required by the state. Physical activity during the school day will be difficult in a temporary setting, but we are planning for ample playground space, along with access to the warehouse facility during inclement weather.

Standard f. The skills necessary for the students to enter the workforce are taught.

Goal: Provide students with basic skills that prepare them for future employment using learning tools such as computers, scientific equipment, and local and national resources. These tools assist students in learning how to learn so that they become lifelong learners and are prepared to enter the workforce with a solid foundation of knowledge and skills.

Objectives: Vision Charter School will:

1. Provide a strong foundation in reading, writing, problem solving, math concepts, science, social studies, and computational skills.
2. Provide a technology-rich environment, encouraging the effective use of technology as a tool in the workplace of the 21st century.
3. Enable students to develop the following intellectual habits important in the work place: adapting to new situations and responding effectively to new information; solving problems; locating and evaluating information from a variety of sources; making flexible connection among various disciplines of thought; thinking logically and making informed judgments.
4. Enable students to develop the following personal habits important in the work place: accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions; honesty, courage, and integrity; a healthy lifestyle; empathy, courtesy, and respect for differences among people; self-confidence; concentration and perseverance; responsible time management; assuming a fair share of the work load; and

working cooperatively with others to reach group consensus.

Standard g. The students are introduced to current technology.

Goal: Provide students with a technology environment using tools such as computers, scientific equipment, and networks linked to local and nationwide resources.

Objectives: Vision Charter School will:

1. Use interactive technology as tools in an integrated educational program rather than as primary instructional delivery systems.
2. All students leaving Vision Charter School will be proficient in using both a word processing and spreadsheet package.
3. Use computers as tools for such activities as accessing research information, authoring, computation, record keeping and data storage, and communication.

Standard h. The importance of students acquiring the skills to enable them to be responsible citizens of their homes, schools, and communities is emphasized.

Goal: Provide students with the skills and understanding necessary to become responsible citizens in their respective jobs and communities of the 21st century.

Objectives: Vision Charter School will:

1. Provide a comprehensive program of community service by the third year of operation that reflects responsible citizenship in a democratic society and an interdependent world.
2. Enable students to develop the following habits of responsible citizens: accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions; honesty, courage and integrity; empathy, courtesy and respect for differences among people; assuming a fair share of the workload; and working cooperatively with others to reach group consensus.
3. Enable students to understand and apply concepts and principles embedded in each of the social studies: history, geography, political science, and economics.

Vision Charter School will achieve the Thoroughness Standards through its taught curriculum and the unique aspects of the school, including our small size and the ability of the Principal and teachers to be fully cognizant of the curricula taught at all grade levels within the school. With one Principal and 8 teachers in the first year, collaboration time can be accomplished during regularly scheduled staff meetings and in-service days. Instruction of the curriculum will be accomplished using an aligned proactive method. A combination of a strong emphasis on kindness, the “golden rule,” and a reward system which honors children who are hard working, responsible, honest, and respectful creates an environment allowing for student peace of mind which then maximizes learning potential.

Instructional Methods

Vision Charter School is distinguished by the multiplicity of ways in which it seeks to ensure student learning. Some of these are highlighted in the sections that follow. The Charter School uses uncommon means to achieve common ends. Through its multiple methods, all students are potentially successful and capable of fulfilling their individual potential. Vision Charter School plans to use the specific methods mentioned earlier (see “Standard e” in Section III.B. Idaho Thoroughness Standards) and the following instructional methods:

- a. The *Subject Matter Method* presumes that an educated learner needs to know clearly defined skills and concepts that can best be learned in an organized sequential fashion.
- b. The *Inquiry and Problem-Solving Method* suggests that learning occurs when individuals think critically and solve problems. The predominant premise of this method is that it is important to know how to retrieve and use the information, not just to have instant recall and possession of the information.
- c. The *Individualized Learning Method* attempts to personalize the learning process to the interests of the individual by allowing students to develop goals for their self-study. The reasons for learning thus become intrinsic--one’s own curiosity and personal applicability of the information learned.
- d. The *Discussion Method* encourages learning through sharing of information and concepts within a group, with the thinking process playing an important role. A discussion leader is prepared to recognize each learner’s level of understanding and can respond at the level most helpful to the learner.
- e. In addition, we will employ a comprehensive plan for character education and a rigorous program of core subject instruction that taps into each child’s innate need to know boundaries while protecting every child’s dignity. It will provide an enriched gifted-and-talented curriculum for all students.

Curriculum Overview

All students will participate in a common core of learning that will fulfill the school’s mission to develop virtuous citizen leaders. It is the intent of the Vision Charter School to remain aligned with the general goals and curriculum of the Idaho State Standards. However, acceleration will take place whenever possible.

Our students will learn to:

1. Develop oral and written skills;
2. Use knowledge and skills, think logically, and solve problems related to mathematics;
3. Have a working understanding of the scientific method to promote responsible use of scientific information;
4. Develop their aesthetic talents in music, visual arts, or performance;
5. Develop oral, written and listening skills in a non-native language;
6. Participate in a comprehensive program of community service that reflects responsible citizens in a democratic society and an interdependent world;

7. Understand and apply the knowledge, concepts, principles, and themes embedded in each of the social studies--history, geography, political science, and economics.

In keeping with Vision Charter School's mission, we recognize that education is more than the assimilation of facts. Proficiency in a discipline means that the learner becomes a capable practitioner and has a sufficient foundation to pursue advanced study. The Charter School emphasizes both the acquisition and application of knowledge.

The Vision Charter School curriculum contains traditional academic subjects, foreign language instruction, fine arts opportunities and a community service component that make the Charter unique. The Idaho State Standards serve as the starting point and are enhanced with unifying themes and other creative methods. The subjects that make up the curriculum are listed and briefly discussed below. Traditional core curriculum areas; language, mathematics and science remain strongly emphasized. The core curriculum will be enhanced with a second language and the fine arts.

Language Arts (English and Foreign). The goal is to develop learners who are effective communicators, who love literature, and are lifelong readers and writers. The reading curriculum is literature based. Comprehension skills and vocabulary development are integrated within the literature program. Dramatization and memorization of accelerated vocabulary is a motivational aspect of the language arts experience. Writing includes self-analysis using the 6-Traits writing model in conjunction with creative and expository writing. Communication skills include speaking, writing and listening and expand into presentation skills. Grammar usage, punctuation and capitalization skills are specifically taught, used and practiced daily. Spelling is taught methodically, focusing on patterns, phonograms, rules and stages that children pass through as they develop spelling proficiency. The innovative teaching methods used in language arts are Spalding's phonics, the 6-Traits, CORE research and the Shurley method.

Mathematics. Students will master the arithmetic processes of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, fractions, and decimals, as well as algebra and geometry. Concept, relevant and manipulative experiences that engage students in exploring, conjecturing, and thinking will continue in these grades. Students will view and use mathematics as a tool for reasoning and problem solving in relevant ways.

Science and Health. The science curriculum is a multiyear sequence that emphasizes hands-on experimentation and functional knowledge of scientific phenomena. Science must take students beyond the factual approach of reading, reciting, drilling, and testing science to actual experiments with instruments. This process approach lets students experience the excitement of science so they can better understand facts and concepts and is in line with the Idaho State Standards. Emphasis will be placed on the Idaho Standards addressing student understanding of the importance of health behaviors and lifestyles, including nutrition and physical activity.

Social Studies and Community Service. All grades will follow the basic elements of the Idaho State Standards curriculum in social studies. In addition there will be a strong emphasis on community service as students apply their understanding of and their contributions to the world around them. We will seek out ways for the students to discover and experience responsibilities and rights as members of our democratic community.

Technology. Technology will be used to support a child's natural way of learning through individual and group discovery and seeking solutions to real-life challenges. Vision Charter School will provide our learners with technology skills that prepare them for future employment. One source of technology will be the Internet. We have developed a draft Computer Use Policy, included in Tab 10. This policy will be in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act. We will allocate up to \$50,000 per year for technology expenditures, including hardware, software, training, maintenance, and repair costs. We will solicit technology donations in an effort to reduce direct costs to our budget that will need to be used for technology purposes.

Curriculum Development and Approval

Curriculum development will be an ongoing process directed by the Administrator/Principal with the approval of the Board of Directors. The curriculum will be implemented and evaluated through observations of teachers and students, with follow-up discussions with the Principal to include written future goals.

Textbooks

Vision Charter School will follow the Idaho State Standards. Textbooks for the school are not yet chosen and will be selected by the Principal with input from teachers and parents. Textbooks will enrich, not drive instruction.

Educational Programs and Services

Provision of supplemental educational programs and services such as physical education, HIV/AIDS education, family life/sex education, occupational education, driver education, guidance and counseling services, summer school programs, parent education programs, social work, and psychological services will be provided to students who require them. The Board of Directors, Principal, and PFA will work together to determine the need for, and estimated cost and value of, these programs. As needed, we will seek outside contracts to meet identified needs, with the understanding that all required services will be performed.

Special Needs Students

Vision Charter School will identify special needs students, including LEP (Limited English Proficient), special education, gifted and talented, and students qualifying for section 504. Vision Charter School will utilize the Idaho Special Education Manual as

now adopted or as amended in the future and will comply with federal regulations dealing with these areas. The Idaho Special Education Manual will be used for identifying, evaluating, programming, developing individualized education plans, planning services, developing our discipline policy, budgeting, and providing transportation for special needs students, as necessary. The Vision Charter School Special Education administrator will be the Section 504 Compliance Officer.

If a student is found to be eligible for special education services at the charter school, services will be provided for that student in one or more of the following ways:

1. Vision Charter School will form a multidisciplinary team to consider a student's eligibility for special education. If a team determines the need for an evaluation by other personnel, such as a school psychologist, speech therapist, or occupational therapist, not currently employed by the school, such evaluations will be contracted with a private provider.
2. Disciplinary problems by special education students will be assessed by the multidisciplinary team. Teachers and administrators will follow the Idaho Special Education Manual (as currently defined in Chapter 7, Section 13, and titled "Student Discipline") to address these issues. See the draft policies for disciplining students with disabilities and Drug and Alcohol Use in Tab 10.
3. Appropriate personnel will be responsible to monitor Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and supervise the implementation as written. A certificated teacher will provide services in an inclusion or a pullout model depending on the degree of intervention necessary to meet the student's needs. A paraprofessional will be used to support instruction as allowed by IDEA and the ESEA. The appropriate personnel will consult with the general education staff to utilize effective classroom interventions, adaptations, and modifications.
4. Vision Charter School will contract with a private provider for the provision of related services. Direct speech, language, or OT services may be provided by a paraprofessional under the direct supervision of a licensed therapist. In the event that the IEP team determines that the student's academic needs cannot be met on site, Vision Charter School will determine the least restrictive environment complying with PL 94-142.
5. Vision Charter School will apply the federal definition of Limited English Proficient (LEP) as defined in Title III and IX of the ESEA. We will use a home-language survey upon student's registration. In addition, the "Woodcock Munoz" test will determine the student's eligibility and language level – L1, L2, and L3. The "Woodcock Munoz" test will be used as a pre-post test to document the progress in both content areas and English language development. Students who are eligible for the LEP program will participate in the Vision Charter LEP program according to state and federal guidelines. State and federally mandated testing of LEP students will be administered as they become available. LEP services may be provided on-site or contracted out.

Other Special Needs Student Services

In a society based on democratic principles, each person has the right to learn at the most appropriate level where growth will take place. Because gifted and/or talented, LEP, Title I and Section 504 students have special needs, they will be provided educational experiences that will strive to meet those needs in the regular classroom as well as in special classes, seminars or workshops. The Charter environment will allow areas to be pursued beyond the scope of the regular curriculum - regardless of their areas of special needs. This will be accomplished through, but not limited to, the following: clustering, competitions, consultations, curriculum compacting, special topic classes, independent study, interest-based workshops, remediation, tutoring and pullout classes. Transportation will be provided as needed and required.

Dual Enrollment

There will be reciprocal agreement between the Vision Charter School and Middleton School District to meet dual enrollment requirements as specified in Idaho Code 33-203. Middleton School District already has a policy in place (Dual Enrollment Policy #630) which it is using successfully.

Academic Freedom, Controversial Issues, and Religion

The Vision Charter School shall offer an educational program appropriate to the level of student understanding which:

1. allows students to study and discuss controversial issues.
2. provides opportunities to examine evidence, facts, and differing viewpoints.
3. teaches the importance of fact, the value of judgment, and the respect of conflicting opinions.

TAB 4: Assessment of Student Educational Progress

Measurable Student Standards

Standards and standardization are the basis of assessment. Performance will be assessed on at least three levels:

1. student progress relative to previous performance will be assessed following state requirements
2. attitudes and personal/academic habits will be assessed through teacher evaluations
3. performance will be assessed relative to district and state developed standards.

Self-assessment will provide a unique learning opportunity for Vision Charter School students. As active participants in assessment of their own work, learners are encouraged to develop an understanding of their strengths and deficiencies, and an objective view of their accomplishments. In addition, an individual score on a piece of work can be improved if the learner is willing to accept the challenge for improvement put forth by the assessment.

The goals of this school are as follows:

1. show improvement or score in the top quartile on standardized tests offered at the national or state level, after a period of two consecutive academic years at Vision Charter School
2. strive for all students to write, read, compute and solve mathematical problems at grade level
3. aim for a student absenteeism of less than 4%
4. samples of each students' work reflects acquired, integrated, extended, refined and meaningful utilization of knowledge
5. students will show positive growth on annual parental/student/teacher surveys that address attitudes and habits toward, but not limited to; work ethic, honesty, showing initiative, taking and accepting responsibility and self-confidence.

Student performance will be assessed relative to other learners of the same age through district, state, and national testing. We will follow the timeline established by the Idaho State Department of Education in administering student assessments. A student baseline will be established during the first year of testing and will be evaluated each year thereafter. That baseline will include, but not be limited to, the following: IRI DWA, DMA, NAEP, and ISAT. As other state mandated tests are required, Vision Charter will administer these tests.

Student Assessment

A goal for students enrolled at Vision Charter School for two (2) years will be to meet the statewide performance standards developed by the Idaho State Department of Education. These standards include the subjects of English, Reading, Science, Social Studies, Health/Wellness, Humanities, and Mathematics.

Student assessment evaluation, reported annually, will consist of:

1. a student baseline developed during the first year using testing results;
2. a comparison of annual results with baseline scores to assess progress;
3. grade-level and school composite scores;
4. a graph of annual results showing year-to-year change;
5. a graph of school scores relative to state and national averages; and
6. sub-analysis of a variety of variables to identify areas for improvement.

Monitoring the progress of our students and evaluating innovations in education procedures are an important part of our curriculum development process. The annual report of student progress will be made to the Idaho Public Charter School Commission no later than June 30 of each year for the previous school year. In addition to the data listed above, it will provide formative and summative data to demonstrate that the school is meeting performance standards prescribed by the state. This data will also include Vision Charter School-developed assessment information.

Student Educational Standards

The State Standards clearly define the essential knowledge and skills for student learning in each program area. Vision Charter school will meet or exceed the state standards in reading, language arts, math, science, social studies, health/wellness, and humanities. Students will be evaluated for progress in the following areas in addition to academic skills:

Personal Responsibility. Students will have positive attitudes and perceptions about creating quality work, striving for excellence and interpersonal skills.

Expanding and Integrating Knowledge. Students will acquire and integrate knowledge and experiences from different subject areas. Students will gather and use subject-area information effectively in order to gain new information and knowledge, classify and organize information, support inferences, and justify conclusions appropriate to the context and audience.

Communication Skills. Students will communicate with clarity, purpose, and an understanding of audience using a variety of communication forms and skills. Students will develop their talents in music, visual arts, and/or performance.

Thinking and Reasoning Skills. Students will utilize, evaluate, and refine the use of multiple strategies to solve a variety of problems.

Social Responsibility and Skills. Students will deal with disagreement and conflict caused by diversity of opinions and beliefs. Students will evaluate and manage their behavior as group members. Students will participate in community service that reflects responsible citizens in a democratic society.

Accreditation

Vision Charter School will obtain accreditation in accordance with Idaho Code 33-119. Idaho Administrative Procedures Act (IDAPA) 08.02.02.140, Accreditation, which defines the State Board of Education's accreditation requirements, will be utilized. This would include developing the following:

1. a School/District Strategic Plan,
2. a Continuous School Improvement Plan,
3. an aligned and focused plan for the improvement of school and staff capacity (including structure, resource allocation, and teacher skill sets) to increase student achievement,
4. a plan to meet state approved accreditation standards,
5. submitting reports as requested, and
6. meeting the Elements of Thoroughness.

Improvement Planning

If it were ever determined that, based on student performance, the school was in need of improving performance, the Principal and the Board of Directors would meet both internally and with outside experts, such as the Idaho Charter School Network, to develop a comprehensive plan for improving performance. Vision Charter School is committed to a school where student success is our top priority. We would examine the current processes and develop a detailed performance improvement plan to address each process deemed important to achieve increased student learning. These processes may include the amount of time spent on critical subjects, the teaching method employed, the textbooks and other learning materials utilized, and the integration of core subjects.

Improvement of Student Learning

Multiple learning opportunities are afforded the Charter School students. Some are familiar, some are novel, but all strive to make learning relevant and purposeful and to actively engage the learner. Problem-solving groups apply knowledge they have acquired and practice new skills by tackling both real-world problems and problems simulated to model the current work world. For example, the school's requirement for students to perform genuine community service not only informs students about real needs our community has, but also encourages them as a group to decide which needs they can reasonably address, plan an approach, implement the plan, and then evaluate the result. Peer teaching, when appropriate, provides an opportunity for learners to become

educators and reinforces their own knowledge and mastery of new skills through presentation of their own work and through working with a “learning buddy.” Projects will include a balance of individual effort and group collaboration to ensure mastery of important basic skills, content, and interaction skills.

Vision Charter School’s learning program is built on the belief that all children can learn, but not in the same way, at the same pace, or from the same sources. It recognizes that children are gifted in different ways and may excel in the following areas: linguistic; mathematical/logical; intrapersonal (self); interpersonal (others); bodily kinesthetic; spatial; and musical.

Although all seven areas will be examined and encouraged through daily instruction, the Charter School will retain a traditional focus on linguistic, kinesthetic, mathematical/logical areas, and implement a unique musical component. The staff at Vision Charter School will ensure a safe, kind environment allowing students to acquire essential information and attitudes that will help them lead productive lives.

Use of the Personalized Learning Goal concept will encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning, while encouraging teachers, parents and the community to share in that responsibility. Working together, the student, parents, and educator will consider learner strength’s and weaknesses. They will then identify an academic and personal goal for each learner. These goals capitalize on learner strengths and shore up areas of weakness, while enhancing parental involvement.

Through the use of personalized goals, the Vision Charter School ensures that children are not penalized for the rate at which they learn. The faster learner is continuously presented with new challenges, while the learner who needs more time benefits from extra adult help, multiple methods, and different environments. The learning program supports Vision Charter School’s goal of developing lifelong learners. It is designed to stimulate the desire to learn, and is based on the belief that all learners possess an innate and unique creativity that can be developed given the appropriate environment. It allows for the joy of knowledge, self-expression, and the thrill of exploration. It is flexible to accommodate the individuality of learners and to evolve as Vision Charter School learns and grows.

TAB 5: Governance Structure

Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc. is a non-profit organization organized and managed under the *Idaho Nonprofit Corporation Act*. The School's Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation are provided in Tab 1. The Board of Directors will be the public agents who control and govern the charter school. Vision Charter School shall be responsible to identify and comply with all statutory requirements affecting the operation of a public school. The Board of Directors' meetings will follow the open meeting laws, keep accurate minutes, and make the minutes available to the public, according to the Bylaws of the charter school.

Organizing Group

The organizing group of founding families has written the Charter petition and elected the initial Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will recruit candidates for the position of school Principal, and establish a preliminary operating budget. The current function of the organizing group is to serve as a data-gathering resource and to provide input and advice to the Board of Directors. We anticipate a total of 10 founding families.

Board of Directors

a. Initial Formation

The Board of Directors of Vision Charter School will consist of no less than five (5) and no more than seven (7) members. Two additional Directors may be added subject to the Bylaws of Vision Charter School.

Selection and Replacement

Elections for members of the Board of Directors will be held every two years according to the Bylaws.

c. Powers and Limitations

Vision Charter School will be a legally and operationally independent entity established by the nonprofit corporation's Board of Directors. The elected Board of Directors will be legally accountable for the operation of the charter school. Vision Charter School acknowledges that upon approval of the petition and the contract, the school's Board of Directors will be public agents required by the Idaho Public Charter School Commission to control the Charter School. Vision Charter School commits to compliance with all federal and state laws and rules and acknowledges its responsibility for identifying essential laws and regulations, and complying with them.

The Board of Directors will have the responsibility to approve the selection of the school Principal, who may not be one of its members. The Board also will be responsible for hearing, and approving or disapproving, the recommendations of the school Principal

with respect to changes in staffing, program, or curriculum. The Board will, when necessary, adjudicate disagreements between parents and the administration. Vision Charter School commits to keeping complete and accurate Board of Directors' meeting minutes and to making them available to the public.

d. Relationship between Board of Directors and School Administration

Administrator / Principal - The Principal will be empowered to provide educational direction, administration, and on-site day to day operation as well as certain decisions concerning but not limited to:

- 1 implementation of the school vision and mission
- 2 instructional materials and supplies
- 3 resource allocation
- 4 state charter school requirements
- 5 school-wide community building
- 6 special services
- 7 contracted services
- 8 disciplinary support
- 9 public and media relations
- 10 business and community partnerships
- 11 curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- 12 professional development
- 13 employment and personnel issues
- 14 enrollment and attendance
- 15 formative/summative staff evaluations
- 16 facility conditions
- 17 transportation
- 18 climate for innovation and growth
- 19 staff and school morale
- 20 district/board liaison
- 21 treasurer/keep budget and financial records
- 22 annual report

Standing Committees and Ancillary Support Personnel

Standing committees will be formed in accordance with the bylaws of the corporation. These committees will include, but are not limited to, a Parent-Faculty Association (PFA), a fundraising committee, and the like.

Ancillary support personnel, including clerical and custodial, will be hired and supervised by the Principal. The state funding formula will be used for funding to hire staff through the regular budgetary process. Additional resources will be sought through grants, volunteers, and fundraising efforts.

Teacher/Parent Decision Making

The PFA and Board of Directors of Vision Charter School may provide consultation to the Principal regarding ongoing plans for the school. Parents of students who attend

Vision Charter School will be involved in the education of their children and in the school at many levels. Parents bring an in-depth understanding of their children's personalities, learning styles, and strengths and weaknesses, which is essential for the continuing educational development of their children. The process to ensure parental involvement will be as follows:

1. Parents will receive written information as each year begins.
2. Parents will be encouraged to attend two parent teacher conferences per year.
3. Parents will be asked to complete a survey during the school year addressing the following issues: safety of students, classroom discipline, school-wide discipline, child's response to classroom atmosphere, and parents' perception of learning environment.
4. Parents will be encouraged to be involved in the Parent-Faculty Association and to volunteer for school projects, programs, committees and to work with students.
5. Parents will be encouraged to provide an appropriate learning environment at home for study.
6. Parents will be encouraged and welcomed to volunteer in their child's(ren's) classrooms(s).
7. Parents will be encouraged to communicate regularly with the school. In turn, the school and the PFA will regularly communicate with the parents.

Parental Participation

As described earlier, parents of students who attend Vision Charter School will be involved in the education of their children and in the school at many levels. The process to ensure parental involvement will be as follows:

1. Parents will receive written materials at the beginning of each school year.
2. Parents will be encouraged to attend two parent teacher conferences per year.
3. Parents will be asked to complete a survey during the school year addressing the following issues: safety of students, classroom discipline, school-wide discipline, child's response to classroom atmosphere, and parents' perception of learning environment, curriculum, and achievement.
4. Parents will be encouraged to be involved in the Parent-Faculty Association (PFA) and to volunteer for school projects, programs, and committees, and to work with students.
5. Parents will be encouraged to provide an appropriate learning environment at home for study.
6. Parents will be encouraged and welcomed to volunteer in their child's(ren's) classrooms(s).

Parents will be encouraged to communicate regularly with the school. In turn, the school and the PFA will regularly communicate with the parents.

Community and Business Partnerships

Vision Charter School has no formal business arrangements or partnerships with other schools, educational programs, businesses, or non-profit organizations at this time.

Audit of Programmatic Operations

An annual educational program and financial audit will be conducted after the completion of each charter school year. Vision Charter School will conduct a programmatic audit through information obtained via its own instruments, timeline, and processes. An independent auditing firm will conduct a financial audit. The Public Charter School Commission may choose to do an independent audit at the Commission's expense. An independent audit may be performed as specified (annually) or at such time as revocation or non-renewal of the charter may be initiated.

Dispute Resolution

The Public Charter School Commission and the Governing Board of Vision Charter School will resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter following the procedures set forth in Section 33-5209, Idaho Code, and the applicable rules of the State Board of Education for notice of defect and submission of a corrective action plan. Vision Charter School would like to meet annually, or as necessary, to discuss relations in an effort to be proactive concerning disputes that may arise relating to provisions of the charter contract.

TAB 6: Employees of the charter school

Employee Qualifications

Vision Charter School's full-time staff will meet or exceed qualifications required by state law. Staff will be required to possess personal characteristics, knowledge, and experience consistent with the philosophy, mission, and expectations of Vision Charter School as outlined within this petition. The Principal will make recommendations to the Board of Directors for approval of instructional staff. Each professional staff member (teachers and the principal) will be on a written contract approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Vision Charter School reserves the right to seek limited certification options as provided by rule of the Idaho State Board of Education when deemed in the best interests of the educational program. Additionally, Vision Charter School reserves the right to employ any person for temporary assistance under the direct supervision of certified staff members. These provisions are intended to allow various community experts and other specialized persons who may not hold certification to contribute to the school according to their talents, experience, creativity, or expertise on an as needed basis.

Job announcements and all other hiring practices will be free of discriminatory language.

Professional Opportunities

Faculty at Vision Charter School will work in an environment where they have opportunities to work with other faculty to align subject areas. The Principal will determine in-service training days in order to provide teachers with training in the teaching methods described in this petition.

Background Checks

All employees will undergo State of Idaho criminal background checks and FBI fingerprinting checks. One fingerprint card will be submitted to the Office of Certification at the State Department of Education and one will be kept in the individual's personnel file.

Targeted Staff Size

Vision Charter School will employ one teacher per class, with additional staff for music, physical education, and foreign language as the budget permits. The goal is to have 1 teacher per 25-30 students per class. Education assistants or other adults will be considered for classes in excess of 28 students.

Estimated staff: 11.5 – 12 FTE in Year 1

Principal – 1 FTE
Kindergarten (maximum class size = 28) – 0.5 FTE
First grade (maximum class size = 28) – 1 FTE
Second grade (maximum class size = 33) – 1 FTE
Third grade (maximum class size = 33) – 1 FTE
Fourth grade (maximum class size = 33) – 1 FTE
Fifth grade (maximum class size = 33) – 1 FTE
Sixth grade (maximum class size = 33) – 1 FTE
Seventh grade (maximum class size = 33) – 1 FTE
Administrative Assistant – 1.5 FTE (One full-time and one part-time employee)
Special Education Teacher – 1 FTE (if needed based on student population)
Music – 0.5 FTE
Spanish – 0.5 FTE (may wait until Year 2 and add 1 FTE)

Teacher Certification

A copy of the certificates for all certified teachers/staff members will be kept on file at Vision Charter School and will be provided upon request.

Employee Benefits

All employees will participate in the following programs and benefits: group health insurance, sick leave benefits, Public Employee Retirement System, Federal Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, and Worker's Compensation Insurance to the extent allowed and required by law.

Status of Vision Charter School Employees

Employees of Vision Charter School are not employees of the Middleton School District. They may apply to teach in the Middleton School District. Teachers at the charter school will not be eligible for an in-district transfer to another school within the Middleton School District.

Experience

Certified teachers at Vision Charter School are public school teachers. Their service at Vision Charter School counts as one year experience on the state indexing scale.

Collective Bargaining

Vision Charter School's staff and employees will be a separate unit for purposes of collective bargaining.

Staff Development

Vision Charter School's Principal will ensure that the school's employees understand and are able to implement the school's vision upon hiring and through in-service training. All employees will undergo an annual performance review.

Health and Safety

To ensure the safety of our employees and students, Vision Charter School will comply with the following health and safety procedures:

1. Conduct criminal history checks for all employees in compliance with Idaho Code 33-130. This requirement is a condition of employment.
2. Require that all students have proof of immunization or have a written parental waiver and have a birth certificate or other identification before being enrolled at the Vision Charter School.
3. Require that all visitors sign in at the office and receive and wear a visitor's pass when visiting the school building.
4. Provide for inspection of the facility in compliance with Section 39-4130 of Idaho Code. Adopt policies to meet all required city, state, and federal health, accessibility, safety, fire, and building codes for public schools. Fire and safety officials using the same guidelines for all public schools will inspect the facility.
5. Adopt and implement, where appropriate, policies regarding health, safety and risk management policies, unless otherwise written and adopted by the Board of Directors. These policies will at a minimum address the above and the following items:
 - a. policies and procedures for response to natural disasters and emergencies, including fires and bomb threats.
 - b. policies relating to preventing contact with blood-borne pathogens.
 - c. a policy requiring that all staff receives training in emergency response, including appropriate "first responder" training.
 - d. policies relating to the administration of prescription drugs and other medicine.
 - e. policies establishing that the school functions as a gun-free, drug-free, alcohol-free and tobacco-free workplace.

Policies will be incorporated as appropriate into the school's student and staff handbooks and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in the school's staff development efforts.

TAB 7: Admission Procedures

Admission Procedures

Vision Charter School will follow the model admission procedure identified by the Idaho State Board of Education in the initial year and for every year thereafter.

- 1) Prospective students will be given the opportunity to enroll regardless of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, social or economic status, or special needs.
- 2) Vision Charter School founders' children will have first preference for admission to the school, with a maximum of 10% of the student population consisting of founders' children.
- 3) Prior to enrollment each year, Vision Charter School will advertise in, local newspapers and make application forms available at the Charter School office, via e-mail or other designated locations in Middleton, Idaho. The application will include information pertinent to filling a limited number of positions in each classroom.
- 4) The primary attendance area for Vision Charter School shall be the boundaries of the Middleton School District on the north, east, and west borders and the City of Middleton impact area for the southern border (this extends the southern boundary from the Boise River approximately one mile to Lincoln Road).
- 5) Students residing in the primary attendance area will be given admission preference to enroll in the school.
- 6) Siblings of current students will be given admission preference to enroll in the school.
- 7) Once enrolled in Vision Charter School, students will not be required to reapply each year thereafter.

Public School Attendance Alternative

Because Vision Charter School is a new entity and not a conversion of an existing school, the attendance alternative would be the same as for those presently residing within the Middleton School District. Students located within the attendance area of the Charter School would have the option to enroll in existing public schools presently serving the area. No student will be required to attend Vision Charter School.

Over-Enrollment Procedures

Vision Charter School has identified the following over-enrollment procedures:

- 1) Vision Charter School founders' children will have first preference for admission to the school, with a maximum of 10% of the student population consisting of founders' children. Any founders' children in excess of the 10% will be placed on the primary attendance area sibling list.
- 2) Five lottery pools and/or waiting lists will be established and prioritized as listed: 1) returning students, 2) children of founder's, 3) siblings of pupils already attending, 4) students within the primary attendance area, and 5) all other students. ~~Initially~~, Applications will be drawn for placement using the Equitable Selection Process outlined in Subsection 203 of the Administrative Rules Governing Charter Schools. The process will begin with a randomly drawn grade and continue with randomly selected grades. Those on the waiting list may be placed in the school any time during the year when an opening occurs. Available positions will be filled from the waiting list established from the initial lottery.
- 3) Once on a waiting list, students will remain eligible for placement within the school without repeating the application process. Each year, Vision Charter will contact all waiting list students and request written verification of the continued desire to be on the waiting list. The order of these waiting lists will be revised annually based on the lottery results. Students wishing to be removed from the waiting list must make their request directly to Vision Charter School, preferably in writing.
- 4) Once the enrollment period is complete and waiting lists have been established through lottery as described above, subsequent applications will be added to the waiting lists on a first come-first served basis.
- 5) A lottery will be held by June 30 to establish the waiting list order of entrance for the upcoming school year in the initial year and each year thereafter. All openings during the school year will be filled according to the order established by that lottery. The lottery will be held in a public forum and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Vision Charter School or the Principal will conduct the lottery selection.

Non-Discrimination

Prospective students will be given the opportunity to enroll regardless of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, social or economic status, or special needs as required by federal state and local laws.

Minimum Enrollment

The minimum enrollment for financial viability depends on the financial status of the school at the start of the school year. As enrollment approaches the minimum for financial viability, the Board of Directors shall take action including, but not limited to, the following:

- 1 Increase enrollment demand through a marketing campaign.
- 2 Increase fund-raising from external sources through the PFA.
- 3 Request voluntary donations from parents.
- 4 Eliminate or defer expenses.
- 5 Prepare for the termination of operation as necessary.

Attendance Requirements

Students, parents, and educators recognize the importance of attendance and punctuality at school. Key reasons for regular and punctual attendance are employability, educational benefits, and success in school.

- 1 Employability, punctuality, and attendance are important skills for employment identified by employers. Developing these skills is critical whether students plan to work during the school year, after graduation, or after college.
- 2 Educational Benefits. Regular attendance assures that students stay current in academic skills, personal management skills, and teamwork skills.
- 3 Success. Students must be present in order to experience success. Further, each student's presence enhances the success of the entire class.

Excused Absences. Absences from school with the knowledge and approval of a student's parents/guardian are excused absences, but such absences are counted toward the maximum allowed per semester. In order for an absence to be excused, oral or written communication from the student's parents/guardian must be received within 48 hours of the last day of the absence, except for school approved activity absences.

Make-up Work. Make-up work is allowed for students who have excused absences. Credit for make-up work is not allowed for an unexcused absence.

Tardies. A student is tardy if he or she is not in the assigned classroom when school starts.

Attendance Requirements. Students may miss up to 4% of the institutional time. Absence from class for any reason, including family convenience, shall be counted when the percentage of attendance and eligibility for promotion is being considered.

Notification of Absences and Discipline. Parents/guardians will be notified on the school report cards, during conferences and via phone calls about absences. Notice of the 8th absence will inform the parent/guardian that the school Principal may deny promotion to the next grade or refer the parent/guardian to the Board of Directors for further discussion and appropriate action.

Grounds for an Appeal. Those parents who have valid reasons to believe that all or part of their child's absences are the result of extraordinary circumstances may request a review of their case following the attendance appeal process below. Extraordinary circumstances may include, but are not limited to, verified illness or medical treatment,

death in the family or death of close friends, and medical or dental professional appointments.

Attendance Appeal Process. If a parent/guardian wishes to appeal the denial of promotion to the next grade due to the attendance requirement, the following policy applies:

1. The parent/guardian has five (5) school days from the date shown on the notification to appeal the loss of credit or denial of promotion.
2. The appeal process starts with the Principal. An adverse decision may be appealed to the Board of Directors. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.
3. In each situation, representatives of the school and the parent/guardian have five (5) days in which to respond to the appeal or the ruling. Appeals and responses shall be in writing.

Grading, Homework, and Promotion

Vision Charter School's Principal will establish policies and procedures for grading, homework, promotion, and retention.

Corrective Action

Those students not reading at grade level or computing grade level mathematics will be identified and receive a variety of services including but not limited to: one-on-one tutoring by paraprofessionals or teachers, tutoring by volunteers, and/or they may attend school during an extended session (if offered). Every effort will be made to help students achieve at Vision Charter School.

Student Activities

Vision Charter School's Principal and staff will determine the school's student activities, as appropriate and necessary, including student government, student organizations, trips, before and after school care, interscholastic and intramural sports and activities, band, orchestra, and choir.

Student Fees

No fees from students are planned at this time. Some fees may be identified in the future by the Principal, as appropriate, and as allowed by the state law. Accommodations for low-income students will be made through fundraising efforts of the PFA. Vision Charter School is a public charter school and will not charge tuition.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Vision Charter School is committed to a safe learning environment. Student expectations for appropriate behavior are high and will be communicated to both students and parents through the student handbook and upon enrollment. Students may be denied attendance to the charter school for any of the following reasons:

- 1 Being a habitual truant
- 2 Being deemed incorrigible by the school Principal
- 3 Being deemed by the Board of Directors to be disruptive to the school for disciplinary reasons
- 4 Being detrimental to the health and/or safety of other students

In addition, students who attend the charter school after being expelled from another district may be placed on probation for one year. During this time, the student may be denied attendance for violation of the probationary requirements.

Parents/guardians will be notified of disruptive behavior via phone calls, in writing, and during school conferences. If the situation causing concern is not immediately corrected, the student may be referred to the school Principal or to the Board of Directors for further discussion and appropriate action. The steps which will be followed to address these concerns are described below. If a student is caught being under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances, Vision Charter School will follow the procedures required by Section 33-210, Idaho Code.

Vision Charter School will assemble a student handbook, following state law and due process that outlines a Code of Conduct, including expectations and consequences for unacceptable behavior. The final handbook will be submitted to the Idaho Public Charter School Commission for approval prior to the start of the school year. Suspension or expulsion will be considered only as the final option in a series of efforts to avoid such measures, including but not limited to, the following steps:

Step 1: Parent/Guardian Incident Notification Procedure (Written and/or Verbal)

Step 2: Principal Intervention.

Step 3: Suspension with parental notification – 3 days. Re-admission after a conference with student, parents, and principal.

Step 4: Suspension with parental notification – 5 days. Re-admission after a hearing within five (5) school days with the Board of Directors.

Step 5: Expulsion until the next calendar break/semester/rest of year. A hearing within five (5) school days, whenever possible, with the Governing Board. The Governing Board shall have the right to permanently expel students for disciplinary or attendance reasons.

It is the intent of Vision Charter School to establish a process for denial of attendance similar to the process currently in use in the Middleton School District (Policy #544).

TAB 8: Business Plan

Business Description

Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Incorporated, is organized exclusively for educational purposes within the meaning of IRC Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from Federal Income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law). Vision Charter School was established in June of 2005.

Marketing Plan

Prospective students will be given the opportunity to enroll regardless of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, social or economic status, or special needs. The primary attendance area for Vision Charter School shall be the boundaries of the Middleton School District on the north, east, and west borders and the City of Middleton impact area for the southern border. This target area has a potential student body of approximately 5,000 students with a minimum expected growth of 150 to 200 students per year. Each year one additional grade will be added through 12th grade.

Vision Charter School will actively recruit students for enrollment using, but not limited to, the following methods:

- Advertising with elementary and middle schools located within the target area upon administrative approval
- Direct mailing to primary attendance area households
- Ongoing articles (in both English and Spanish) in the Middleton Gazette
- Holding public forums in Middleton at the Civic Center
- Posting advertising materials in English and Spanish in prominent locations in Middleton (i.e. the library, the community notice board, at City Hall).
- News releases and articles

The cost for the advertising budget is approximately \$1,500.

Facility Description

We plan to construct a permanent school building prior to the start of school in August 2010 and the facilities will be inspected to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal guidelines as provided in Section 39-4130, Idaho Code and the *Americans with Disabilities Act*.

Instructional Arrangements

Vision Charter School plans to open in August of 2006. Grade organization will generally consist of traditional single-grade classrooms. The Principal will determine the school calendar, schedule, and hours of operation based upon a modified schedule. Within that general format, the Principal, in consultation with the Board of Directors, will establish the school year calendar in compliance with the requirement of providing 900 hours of instruction. The school day is initially planned to begin at 8:00 AM and end at 2:45 PM (school start and ending times will also be dependent on busing availability). This schedule will be reviewed on an annual basis and may be changed, as necessary, by the Principal in consultation with the Board of Directors. State and District-required hours of attendance will be met.

Administrative services will be provided by the Vision Charter School Principal supplemented by other contracted services as needed. Annual programmatic and financial reports will be presented to the Board of Directors. The Principal will also serve as the liaison between the Governing Board, the Public Charter School Commission, and parents.

Financial operations will be contracted out to licensed and bonded entities. Funding sources will include state allocation per pupil, federal start-up grants, private grants, business partnerships, and donations.

Day-to-Day Operations

The Principal of Vision Charter School will determine the day-to-day operations of the school. The Governing Board will have oversight authority.

Budget: The budget for Vision Charter School, 1) will be prepared in compliance with section 33-801, Idaho Statutes and policy of the State Board of Education, 2) will be presented at a public hearing in June of the year the school will open, and 3) will be delivered to the State Department of Education as required on or before July 15 prior to the start of the school year. Copies of the budget will be provided to the Middleton School District. The budget will be prepared, approved and filed using the Idaho Financial Accounting Reporting Management System (IFARMS) format.

Start-Up and Long Term Budget: A start-up budget with forms, three-year operating budget, and first year month-by-month cash flow form are attached.

Income Sources: Funding sources will include state allocation per pupil, federal start-up grants, private grants, business partnerships, and donations.

Working Capital and Assets: Vision Charter School does not expect to have working capital and assets until after the Charter is approved.

Fundraising: A committee has been established to conduct fundraising efforts to generate capital or to supplement the per-pupil allocations. We have not included any fundraising monies in our budget.

Expenditures

Expenditures will be handled as described in the following sections.

Purchasing Process: Vision Charter School’s Principal will determine procedures for procuring goods and services, with approval of the Board of Directors.

Payroll Processing: Vision Charter School intends to outsource its payroll processing as determined by the Principal, with approval of the Board of Directors.

Financial Management: The accounting records will be kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Vision Charter School will follow the requirements set forth by the Idaho State Department of Education, including formats for account numbering. The Principal of Vision Charter School will be responsible for financial management.

Bonding: Documentation of bonding of all personnel involved in the school's financial operations will be provided prior to the opening of the school.

Transportation

Transportation will be provided to in-district students and at selected pick-up locations for out-of-district students. If seating becomes limited, priority will be given to in-district students. We have based our transportation costs on an estimate provided to us by the Middleton Bus Company.

Food Service

Free and reduced lunch forms will be provided to all students by Vision Charter School. Once a suitable lunch preparation facility is available, any qualifying student will receive their lunch from the school. Until that time, alternative methods of feeding qualifying students are being explored, including use of the Idaho Special Milk Program and contracting food services from the Middleton School District. Vision Charter School will use verification, reporting, and record keeping procedures as outlined in the National School Lunch Program through the State Department of Education.

Resumes

Resumes for the Board of Directors are on the following pages.

Name: Elizabeth “Lee” Lyon Hannah

Home/Office Address: 23412 Lansing Lane
Middleton, Idaho 83644
Phone: 208-585-6544

Marital Status: Married, two children

EDUCATION

M.P.H.	Public Health/Epidemiology, 1997 University of Kansas Kansas City, Kansas
D.V.M.	Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, 1993 University of Florida, College of Veterinary Medicine Gainesville, Florida
M.S.	Master of Science (Prog. Development and Eval.), 1991 University of Florida, Department of Ag. and Extension Ed. Gainesville, Florida
B.S.	Bachelor of Science, 1989 University of Florida, Department of Animal Science Gainesville, Florida

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**Research Faculty, Boise State University, Master of Health Sciences Program (1/03-Present)**

Provide instruction to Boise State University Master's degree students in epidemiology, research techniques, and statistics. Work with students to identify thesis topics, conduct research, and report research findings. Develop and conduct research grants with the Center for Health Policy and the Department of Community and Environmental Health. Support research activities by other BSU departments and colleges.

University of Utah, School of Medicine, Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Clinical Epidemiology, Medical Epidemiologist (10/03-12/04)

Responsible for the development, implementation and analysis of research projects related to antibiotic use and appropriate antibiotic prescribing. Currently the lead investigator involved with a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Grant on agricultural antibiotic use and rural physician antibiotic use.

Adjunct Faculty, Idaho State University, Master of Public Health Program (8/01-Present)

Provide instruction to Idaho State University MPH students in epidemiology, research techniques, and statistics. Work with students to identify thesis topics, conduct research, and report research findings.

Rocky Mountain Epidemiology, LLC, Consultant / Epidemiologist (2/01-Present)

Provide consultation to public and private organizations on a variety of issues including data collection and analysis, program development, and program evaluation. Additional skills include assisting with the identification and writing of grants, preparing manuscripts for publication, presenting at local and national meetings, and helping build relationships and infrastructure which will allow for expanded public health activities.

Qualis Health, Idaho Branch, Medical Epidemiologist (7/00-10/03)

Experience in the development, implementation and analysis of quality improvement projects in a variety of clinical settings including hospitals, physician office's, dialysis facilities and nursing homes under the Idaho Medicare contract. Currently involved with a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grant on antimicrobial resistance. Particular emphasis is placed on two areas; data issues and intervention development and implementation. Data issues include data collection tool development and testing, field data collection, data quality, analysis of collected data, and production of summary reports. Intervention activities include review of current literature, intervention development, design and implementation of the interventions, and design of the evaluation component. Additional responsibilities include representing Qualis Health to external stakeholders and partners, developing partnerships with academic institutions, state agencies, community organizations, and federal agencies, preparing manuscripts for publication, locating and successfully competing for grants, and developing additional areas of expertise within Qualis Health.

U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corp, Veterinary Officer (7/98-6/00)

Detailed as a Medical Epidemiologist to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) assigned to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Disease Surveillance and Investigation, Denver, Colorado.

- ◆ Investigated suspected and confirmed disease outbreaks throughout the State of Colorado including: questionnaire development, case/control interviews, data collection and analysis, disease control and prevention, and dissemination of results.
- ◆ Developed and implemented a statewide influenza surveillance system using school and sentinel physician reporting. Worked with private practice physicians to improve recognition and targeting of high-risk patients for immunization. Served as a lead on a Physician Summit targeting improved immunization rates among private physicians in the metro Denver area. Member of the Colorado Influenza and Pneumococcal Alert Coalition, the statewide influenza and pneumococcal coalition. Developed and implemented a comprehensive website on influenza for the state health department.
- ◆ Conducted analytic studies using multiple data sources (BRFSS data, hospital discharge data, death certificate data, etc.), determined which data sources to utilize, cleaned and quality checked data files, performed data analysis using SAS and Epi-

Info software, prepared summary reports using the analyzed data, and presented findings to internal and external groups.

- ◆ Developed and initiated a new statewide surveillance system for Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) working closely with other state and CDC staff. Facilitated meetings with university and private practice neurologists and pathologists. Developed a questionnaire for use in the epidemiologic and clinical investigation of newly diagnosed CJD cases.
- ◆ Prepared journal articles and other publications, handled media requests, prepared grants and cooperative agreements, responded to public requests and concerns, worked with local health departments, other state health departments, and other PHS and HHS agencies.

U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corp, Veterinary Officer (2/95-6/98)

Detailed as a Clinical Consultant/Epidemiologist to the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA), Quality Improvement Operations Staff, Kansas City, MO.

- ◆ Managed projects related to quality improvement for Medicare beneficiaries, both those developed by Peer Review Organizations and those developed by the HCFA Regional or Central Offices.
- ◆ Developed and implemented a seven state Congestive Heart Failure project, including development of chart abstraction tools, ensuring data quality, performing the data analysis, and preparing the results for dissemination.
- ◆ Served as the lead on a multistate project addressing outcomes following Carotid Endarterectomy surgery.
- ◆ Worked with CDC National Immunization Program staff to develop Interagency Agreements in 1995 and 1996. Developed a Scope of Work for 1995. Wrote contract language and served as the HCFA lead on the 1997-1998 Guillan-Barre Syndrome (GBS) study that examined the relationship between influenza immunization and the incidence of GBS among Medicare beneficiaries. Planned and organized a National Immunization Conference which was held in Chicago, 1996, program chair, 1997.
- ◆ Chaired the data committee for the national mammography campaign. Ensured timely delivery of data to HCFA's internal and external partners.

Clinical Veterinarian (6/93-6/98)

Managed a mixed animal satellite clinic in Oregon (6/93-2/95). This clinic offered full medical, surgical, and emergency services; providing laboratory, radiology, and farm call services. Supervised employees (three full-time and one part-time). (4/95-6/98) Served as a part-time relief veterinarian in a small animal clinic. Performed medical consultations, diagnostic workups, and surgical services.

Laboratory Technician

Supervised the laboratory on weekends and assisted staff during the week. Performed bacterial cultures and sensitivities using MIC techniques. Read cultures and reported results to referring doctor. Performed routine serology and parasitology testing. (5/91-5/93) Conducted research related to the immune system (major histocompatibility complex) of various species. Supervised laboratory personnel and developed schedules.

Laboratory techniques included southern blotting, radioactive labeling, PCR, and plasmid cloning and subcloning. (7/87-5/91)

Research Assistant (6/90-8/90)

Conducted research on the maternal immune response to pregnancy in the mare, including field and laboratory work. James A. Baker Institute, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

- ◆ Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Program, CDC, assigned to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (7/98-6/00).
- ◆ How to Work Effectively with the Media, Colorado Public Health Assoc., March 2000.
- ◆ Prevention Effectiveness Course, CDC, October 5-7, 1999.
- ◆ Surveillance and Scientific Communications Course, CDC, October 26-30, 1998.
- ◆ Certificate Program in Outcomes Management and Research, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS. Lecture series focused on developing, assessing, and evaluating health outcomes (9/96-4/97).
- ◆ Thirteenth Annual Graduate Summer Program in Epidemiology, The Johns Hopkins University, School of Hygiene and Public Health, Baltimore, MD (6/95-7/95)

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

2001	Idaho Public Health Association, President 2003-2006
2001	Idaho Rural Health Association
2000	Diplomat, American College of Veterinary Prev. Medicine
1993	American Veterinary Medical Association

AWARDS/ACHIEVEMENTS

2000	Group Recognition Award, Food and Drug Admin, DHHS
2000	Finalist, J.D. Lane Young Investigator Award, COA
1998	Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service, DHHS
1998	Regional Administrator's Citation, HCFA, Region VII
1998	Unit Commendation Award, HCFA, Region VII
1998	Nominated for an Exceptional Capabilities Promotion
1998	Nominated for a P.H.S. Commendation Medal
1997	Appointed to the P.H.S. Uniform Board
1996	Achievement Medal, U.S. Public Health Service
1996	Nominated for an Exceptional Capabilities Promotion
1995-1996	Kansas Health Foundation Scholarship
1995	Regional Director's Award, HHS, Region VII
1990-1992	President and Vice-President of Veterinary School Class
1990	Geraldine R. Dodge Summer Research Fellowship

PRESENTATIONS

- ◆ Molecular analysis of susceptible and resistant *E. coli* recovered from food, stool, and clinical specimens in a rural community setting. Elizabeth Hannah, J. R. Johnson, F. Angulo, B. Haddadin, J. Williamson, M. Samore. 2004 International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases, March 1, 2004, Atlanta, Georgia.
- ◆ Community-based surveillance of resistant *E. coli* in commercially purchased meat products - 2002-2004. Elizabeth Hannah, F. Angulo, B. Haddadin, J. Williamson, M. Samore. 2004 International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases, February 29, 2004, Atlanta, Georgia.
- ◆ Molecular analysis of susceptible and resistant *Escherichia coli* recovered from food, stool, and clinical specimens in a rural community setting. Elizabeth Hannah, J. R. Johnson, F. Angulo, A. Gajewski, M. Samore. Presentation at the 2003 Conference on Antimicrobial Resistance, June 23-25, 2003.
- ◆ Population-based surveillance of resistant *E. coli* carriage among rural community residents: epidemiology and risk factors. Lee Lyon Hannah, Frederick Angulo, Michelle Wilkin, James Johnson, Sam Haddadin, and Matthew Samore. Poster presentation at the 2003 Conference on Antimicrobial Resistance, June 23-25, 2003.
- ◆ Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease after Receipt of a Previously Unimplicated Brand of Dura Mater Graft, Commissioned Officers Association Meeting, June 9, 2000, Scottsdale, AZ.
- ◆ Trends in Behavioral Risks and Outcomes for Cardiovascular Disease, Colorado, 1990-1998. 2000 EIS Conference, April 2000, Atlanta, GA.
- ◆ Control and Prevention of Adult Varicella Among Detainees in an Immigration and Naturalization Service Facility. National Immunization Conference, June 1999, Dallas, TX.
- ◆ Control and Prevention of Adult Varicella Among Detainees in an Immigration and Naturalization Service Facility. 1999 EIS Conference, April 1999, Atlanta, GA.
- ◆ Failure to Titrate Angiotensin-converting Enzyme Inhibitors in Patients Hospitalized with Congestive heart Failure. 1998 Public Health Professional Conference, COA Meeting, June 9, 1998, Bethesda, MD.

PUBLICATIONS

- ◆ **Hannah EL**, Angulo FJ, Johnson JJ, Haddadin B, Williamson J, and Samore MH. Rural Community-Based Study of Antimicrobial-resistant *Escherichia coli*: Epidemiology, Reservoirs, and Potential Consequences. *EID*, 11(10):1614-17, 2005.
- ◆ Stevenson KB, Murphy C, Samore M, **Hannah EL**, Barbera J, Gerberding JL, and Houck P. Assessing the Status of Infection Control Programs in Small Rural Hospitals in the Western United States. *Am J Infect Control*, 32(5):255-261, 2004.
- ◆ Stevenson KB, Samore M, Barbera J, **Hannah E**, Moore JW, Houck P and Gerberding JL. Evaluating Antimicrobial Management in Rural

- Community Hospitals in the Western United States. *Am J Health Syst Pharm*, 61:787-792, 2004.
- ◆ Stevenson KB, Samore M, Barbera J, Moore JW, **Hannah E**, Houck P, Tenover FC, and Gerberding JL. Detection of Antimicrobial Resistance by Small Rural Hospital Microbiology Laboratories: Comparison of Survey Responses with Current NCCLS Laboratory Standards. *Diagn Microbiol Infect Dis* 47:303-311, 2003.
 - ◆ **Hannah EL**, Stevenson KB, Lowder C, Adcox MJ, Davidson RL, Mallea MC, Narsimhan N, and Wagnild JP. Outbreak of Hemodialysis Vascular Access Infections Related to Malfunctioning Cuffed Tunneled Catheters: Making the Case for Active Infection Surveillance. *Infect Cont Hosp Epidemiol*, 23:538-541, 2002.
 - ◆ Stevenson KB, **Hannah EL**, Lowder, CA, et al. Epidemiology of Hemodialysis Vascular Access Infections from Longitudinal Infection Surveillance Data: Predicting the Impact of NKF-DOQI Clinical Practice Guidelines for Vascular Access. 2002; 39(3):549-555.
 - ◆ **Hannah EL**, Belay ED, Gambetti P, Krause G, Parchi P, Capellari S, Hoffman RE, and Schonberger LB. Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease after Receipt of a Previously Unimplicated Brand of Dura Mater Graft. *Neurology* 2001; 56(8):1080-1083.
 - ◆ **Hannah, EL**, AM Bailey, R Hajjeh, K Gershman, M Lindsley, and R Hoffman. Public health response to two cases of Blastomycosis in Colorado residents. *CID* 2001;32:e151-e153.
 - ◆ **Hannah, Elizabeth Lyon**, McCarthy, Tara, Beach, Michael, et al. CDC. Pseudomonas Dermatitis/Folliculitis Associated with Pools and Hot Tubs – Colorado and Maine, 1999—2000. *MMWR* 2000; 49(48):1087-1091.
 - ◆ **Hannah, Elizabeth Lyon**, Rickard, Russ, Hoffman, Richard, and Moolenaar, Ron. Trends in Behavioral Risks and Outcomes for Cardiovascular Disease, Colorado, 1990—1998. *Colorado Medicine*, 2000; 97(11):392-393.
 - ◆ **Hannah, Elizabeth Lyon**, CDC. Blastomycosis Acquired Occupationally During Prairie Dog Relocation, Colorado, 1998. *MMWR* 1999; 48:98-100.

**Jody Benson
14460 Sand Hollow Road
Caldwell, Idaho 83607
(208) 250-5298**

Education

- 1978 - Graduated from Pope John XXIII Catholic High School, Everett, Ma.
- 2002 - Registered Yoga Instructor with a 500 hour certification through Master Yoga Academy, La Jolla, Ca.
- 2005 – May 90 hour Real Estate licensing program with Executrain of Boise

Work Experience

June 1 2005 to present:

Real Estate Agent at Silverhawk Realty.

Presently being nominated for 2 awards, Rookie of the Year and Top Producer of the Year.

2002 thru 2005:

Owner Energy Works Yoga Studio~ 208 Main St. Middleton, Idaho 83644

Class schedule in studio as well as Contracts with the Nampa Recreation Center, Caldwell Recreation Center, Albertson College of Idaho & Mountain States Tumor Institute with St. Luke's Hospital.

Closed studio in March of 2005 and ended all contracts except continuing to teach a credit program at Albertson College of Idaho.

2000 thru 2002

Fine Host Corporation. Simplot Dining Hall, Albertson College of Idaho.

Asst. Mgr. working full time running the dining facility on campus overseeing all operations of the facility with a staff of 25 employees.

1996 thru 1999

Milligan's Fine Dining and Grill, La Jolla, Ca. 92037

Asst. Mgr. working full time running a high profile fine dining facility. Overseeing all areas of management and operations with a staff of 20 employees.

- Originally from Boston, Ma. Moved to Middleton 6 years ago from San Diego. Married to David Benson, an Independent Insurance Broker. Jody & David have 3 children, Dina 14, Lisa 11 & Dakota 7. Currently working with Silverhawk Realty as a licensed real estate agent

MICHELLE R. LAMBRIGHT
23640 LANSING LANE
MIDDLETON, IDAHO 83644
(208) 585-3818
mrlcpa@earthlink.net

SUMMARY: Over 25 years experience in the accounting sector. Extensive skill in taxation and forensic accounting.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Michelle R. Lambricht, C.P.A. Middleton, Idaho **1994 – Present**
Sole Proprietor

Self-employed specializing in taxation and forensic accounting. This includes preparation of tax returns, civil and criminal litigation, and bookkeeping services.

Internal Revenue Service, Boise, Idaho **1/1991 to 5/1994**
Special Agent, Criminal Investigation Division

Criminal investigations, including tax fraud, money laundering, embezzlement, bankruptcy fraud and narcotic related activities.

Internal Revenue Service, Boise, Idaho **5/1988 to 1/1991**
Revenue Agent

Civil investigations, including tax protestors, compliance projects, and civil fraud cases. Prior to transferring to the Criminal Investigation Division I reviewed civil cases before their closure.

Internal Revenue Service, Boise, Idaho **8/1986 to 5/1988**
Intern with Internal Revenue Service

Part-time employment included non-filing projects, specialized tax divisions, and Phase I training for Revenue Agents.

Boise State University, Accounting Department Boise, Idaho **10/1986 to 5/1988**

Part-time employment, included grading homework and tests for several instructors.

Kamille Crawford

16266 Mink Road, Caldwell Idaho (208)454-0316
kamillecrawford@yahoo.com

Experience 1994-1997 Notus Junior and Senior High School Notus, ID

English Teacher

- Taught English in both the Junior and Senior High School
- Class advisor to the Senior Class

1996-2001 Notus High School Notus, ID

Head Varsity Volleyball Coach

- 1998-2001 Conference champions, qualified for state tournament
- 2000-2001 District champions, 5th & 3rd place finishes at state
- 2001 Sportsmanship award at state tournament
- 1994-1995 Coached junior varsity and junior high volleyball

1995-1998 Notus High School Notus, ID

Basketball and Track Coach

- Coached varsity and junior varsity girls basketball
- Coached junior high and high school track

1992-1993 Vallivue High School Caldwell, ID

Volleyball Coach and Student Teacher

- Coached junior varsity and junior high volleyball
- 1993 District Champions
- Student taught U.S. History at Vallivue High School

Education 1991-1993 Albertson College of Idaho Caldwell, ID

- B.A., History & English, certified in History, English, & Humanities
- Played volleyball

1988-1990 Brigham Young University Provo, UT

Awards Academic Scholarship- Brigham Young University
 Dean's List- Albertson College of Idaho 1991-1993
 2000 Third District Coaches Association Coach of the Year
 2001 Sportsmanship Award at the state tournament

Volunteer Experience

Worked in Short Sports program for Caldwell Parks and Rec
 Vision Charter School Board of Directors
 Volunteer at Purple Sage Elementary
 Member of PTA at Purple Sage Elementary

TAB 9: Not a virtual school

Vision Charter School is not a virtual charter school

TAB 10: Termination or dissolution

Public Access

Vision Charter School's policies regarding the ways in which the public may have access to the school's students, staff, and facilities will be similar to that of the Middleton School District. We will comply with all aspects of the Idaho Public Records Law (Idaho Code 9-337 – 9-350). The Charter School will comply with Idaho statutes relating to public records and public meetings, as indicated in the Bylaws. We will comply with the Idaho Open Meeting Law (Idaho Code 67-2340-67-2347). Vision Charter School gives permission for public inspection.

Complaint Process

Vision Charter School's procedures for a complaint process for parents/guardians and the public are as follows, with the ultimate authority residing with the Board of Directors of the Vision Charter School;

1. Have pertinent parties meet and try to resolve the issue.
2. If no resolution can be found to the dispute, the Principal will intervene and attempt to find a resolution.
3. Ultimately, the issue could be brought before the Board of Directors for resolution. Once all needed input has been obtained by the Board of Directors, the Board will render a final decision.

School Records

Vision Charter School's Principal will determine how the school will maintain school records and required information, consistent with state and Federal guidelines

IRS Regulations

Vision Charter School will comply with all Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations and reporting requirements.

Use of District Facilities

At this time we have no arrangements to utilize any Middleton School District facilities.

Lease/Purchase Documentation

When Vision Charter School enters into any lease or purchase agreement for portable units or facilities prior to the opening of the school, the school will provide complete documentation of this commitment. Our current plan is to open with portable units leased from a Treasure Valley dealership.

Inspection Reports

Vision Charter School will provide certification that the facilities meet all requirements for health, safety, fire, and accessibility for the handicapped required of all public schools prior to the opening of the school and by the date specified in the contract. The Charter School will provide initial and ongoing certifications of the facilities for health, safety, and fire compliance to the district and other entities as required.

State Compliance

Vision Charter School will comply with the rules of the State Board of Education and Superintendent for Public Instruction as they relate to Charter Schools and all state statutes applying to public education unless exempt through charter legislation.

Right to Evaluate Contract Compliance

The Public Charter School Commission shall retain the right at any time to evaluate the degree to which Vision Charter School is meeting the terms of the contract. The Board of Trustees or designee may choose to have a district representative(s) or an independent evaluator(s):

1. visit the Charter School;
2. review the Charter School's records and data;
3. directly survey the Charter School's parents/guardians, students, or employees;
4. audit the books of the Charter School;
5. pursue other reasonable means of determining accountability for the Charter School contract.

To enact any of the above measures, the Board must state the specific nature of the concern and that the concern must be substantial. The request must be reasonable in terms of the timing and the amount or types of information required.

Amending the Contract

A material revision of the terms of the Charter School contract requires the approval of the Idaho Public Charter School Commission and the Board of Directors.

Termination or Non-renewal

Vision Charter School understands that the Idaho Public Charter School Commission may terminate the charter if it finds that the Charter School has:

1. Committed a material violation of any condition, standard or procedure set forth in the charter petition or contract;
2. Failed to substantially meet one or more of the student educational standards identified in the charter contract;

3. Failed to meet generally accepted accounting standards of fiscal management;
4. Failed to submit required reports, as defined by Idaho Charter School Law, to the district;
5. Lost substantial support of the school's students, parents, staff, and/or community;
6. Shown that it is not in the best interest of students for the school to continue operation;
7. Violated any provision of law;
8. Filed for bankruptcy or financial reorganization and is unable to pay its creditors.
9. Except in emergency situations, the Public Charter School Commission will provide thirty (30) days written prior notice and an opportunity for the Charter Schools' Board of Directors to be heard by the Idaho Public Charter School Commission, before the charter contract can be terminated.
10. A decision to terminate or not to renew a charter may be appealed directly to the Idaho State Board of Education, based on Idaho Code 33-5207, 5208, 5209.

Dissolution

In cases of termination or non-renewal, the Governing Board of Vision Charter School is responsible for the dissolution of the business and affairs of the school. Vision Charter School will fully cooperate with the Middleton School District for the dissolution process. All records of students residing in the District will be immediately transferred to the District. All students will receive written notice of how to request a transfer of student records to a specific school. Vision Charter School will accommodate student record requests from schools outside of Middleton School District for up to one year after dissolution. Upon the dissolution of Vision Charter School, remaining assets will be distributed to creditors pursuant to Sections 30-3-114 and 30-3-115 of the Idaho Code. All remaining assets will be distributed to the Idaho Public Charter School Commission.

Proof of Attendance at the Petitioner's Workshop

Four of the five Board of Directors attended the Petitioner's Workshop held on July 11, 2005. Certificates of Attendance have been included for three attendees.

Policies and Procedures

Please see the attached policies and procedures on discipline, attendance, Drug and Alcohol Use, and computer use for Visions Charter School. These policies will be considered draft until the school Principal is hired and has the opportunity to review and accept these policies. If the Principal desires any changes to these policies, they will be resubmitted to the Idaho State Charter School Commission for approval.

Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc.
Draft Attendance Policy

Attendance at school must be regular and punctual. Make-up work granted a student after an absence is, at the very best, a poor replacement for the actual class experience. A student's absence requires additional work for everyone, including the student, instructor, and school administration, which cost the school money. Students should plan on attending school every day that classes are scheduled.

A student may not miss more than nine (9) days a semester. Absences from a specific class may be considered as a day of absence. All students should be in physical attendance 90% of instructional time. Students should be in the classes in which they are enrolled unless they have been excused to conduct school business.

Students not meeting the attendance requirement may not receive credit even through their grades are passing. However, those students who believe that all or part of their absences are the result of extraordinary circumstances may request a review of their cases.

Examples of extraordinary circumstances include the following:

1. Extended illness of such severity that the student cannot attend school regularly; verification of the extended illness must be obtained from a licensed health official.
2. Involvement in an accident or other malady which may preclude regular attendance until full recuperation; verification of the need to be away from the school setting until recuperated must be obtained from a licensed health official.
3. Pregnancy-associated difficulties that would endanger the emotional and physical well-being of the affected individual as verified by a licensed health official.
4. Educational and travel programs initiated by the parents and/or students that are neither sanctioned nor sponsored by the school.
5. Absences that are beyond the control of the student, parent, or school.

A Review Committee, appointed by the Principal, will examine the student's records and may approve a waiver of the loss of credit. The records of the student, which may be considered, will include the following:

1. Attendance for the current year and previous year and semester, specifically including the number of absences which occurred, and the amount and type of extended illness.
2. Grades for the current and previous year and semester, specifically including the subject or grade under consideration.
3. Make-up of work missed, including whether the work was made up prior to the absence or after the absence.

4. Make up of time missed in supervised attendance during the school year or during the period immediately following the completion of the school year.

If the Review Committee does not approve the waiver of the loss of credit, the student may request a determination by the Appeals Board, consisting of the Principal and Board of Directors. A final determination will be made from materials presented to this Appeals Board.

Appeals Process

1. Appeal forms will be given to each student near the end of each semester.
2. A letter requesting a waiver of attendance policy should be submitted to the Attendance Officer at the end of each semester. Any physician's statement or appropriate verification of absence should accompany this letter.
3. The Review Committee will convene to review all requests for waiver of attendance policy.
4. Recommendations not to grant credit may be appealed by the parents to the Appeals Board.
5. A personal appearance may be requested by the parent to attend the Review Board and/or Appeals Board hearings.

Definitions

Excused absence: Any absence that is approved by the parent or school. The student has the opportunity to make-up work in classes missed.

Truancy: Absence from classes without the approval of the parent or school authorities.

Truancy Process

First truancy: A conference will be held between the school Principal and the student. The parents will be notified. The student will be required to make-up all work missed.

Second Truancy: A conference will be held with the student, parent, and school Principal. The student will be required to make-up all work missed.

Third truancy: A conference will be held with the student, parent, and school Principal. The student may be referred to the Appeals Board for consideration and action.

***Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc.
Draft Discipline Policy***

Safe Environment

The number one goal of Vision Charter School is having a safe and orderly school and creating an environment that is conducive to learning. We also believe that all parents send their children to school expecting that their child will be taken care of physically, emotionally, socially and academically. As a result, some student behavior cannot, and will not, be condoned in any way.

Students who engage in fighting and/or who are defiant to a staff member will have the following consequences:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1 st Offense | - | Loss of recesses for one week |
| 2 nd Offense | - | 1 day in school suspension |
| 3 rd Offense | - | 2 day in school suspension |
| 4 th Offense | - | referred to Board of Directors for possible expulsion |

*Parents will be notified at the time of each offense.

Other behavior that will not be tolerated includes harassment and intimidation of other students, profanity, and not using the playground equipment appropriately. The consequences of these infractions will correspond with the severity of the offense.

Drugs and Weapons

Vision Charter School has a **zero tolerance policy** for drugs and weapons. Students in possession of drugs or weapons will be automatically suspended with an expulsion hearing in front of the Board of Directors.

Suspension and Expulsion

Vision Charter School recognizes that students are entitled to attend a free public school and that even temporary denial of that right may occur only after careful attention designed to protect the individual rights of the students. However, the school is also responsible for providing a safe learning environment which protects the safety of all students, volunteers, and personnel.

The Idaho Legislature has empowered public schools to provide temporary suspension and for the expulsion of individual students when circumstances demonstrate that such action is necessary for the protection of the rights of other students, necessary for the orderly operation of the school process, and/or necessary for the protection of the safety of other students.

Suspension

Authority to temporarily suspend students has been delegated by the Idaho legislature to principals and school Principal. No person other than the school principal/administrator or the Board of Directors may suspend a student from Vision Charter School.

Grounds for suspension may include the following:

1. A student may be suspended for disciplinary reasons, or for other conduct that is disruptive and detrimental to the instructional process of the school, or to the health and safety of other students and the general climate of the school.
2. A student may also be suspended when, in the judgment of the Principal, the suspension is necessary to protect the health, welfare, or safety of the student or other students of the school.

Period of suspension: A temporary suspension by the Principal shall not exceed five (5) school days in length. Upon appeal to the Board of Directors, the suspension may be extended for an additional ten (10) days. This appeal for additional suspension would only be granted if there was a finding by the Board that immediate return to school attendance by the temporarily suspended student would be detrimental to other pupil's health, safety, or welfare.

Procedure for suspension:

1. Prior to suspension, steps will be taken to ensure compliance with all applicable policies and procedures.
2. Prior to suspension, unless an emergency exists, the Principal shall grant the student an informal hearing on the reasons for the suspension.
3. The student shall be given the opportunity to challenge the reasons for the suspension and explain the circumstances surrounding the event.
4. If the student is suspended, a complete explanation will be given orally and in writing to the student regarding the terms or conditions required to lift the suspension.
5. Written notice describing the reasons for the suspension, term of the suspension, and conditions required to lift the suspension shall be delivered or mailed to the parent or guardian.
6. The Board of Directors shall receive a copy of the written notice delivered to the parent or guardian.

Expulsion

Only the Appeals Board, consisting of the Principal and the Board of Directors, may expel a student. If a Special Education or Special Services student accumulates, or is likely to accumulate, more than ten (10) days of suspension in

a school year, the students IEP team must be convened to determine if the current program and placement are appropriate and if the behavior is related to the student's disability. Based on this determination, the IEP Team shall make needed modifications to the student's IEP.

Grounds for Expulsion:

A student may be expelled only for the following reasons:

1. When the student is a habitual truant
2. When the student is incorrigible
3. When the student's conduct is such as to be continually disruptive to the instructional effectiveness of the school.
4. When the student's conduct is such as to be continually disruptive to the instructional effectiveness of the school.
5. When the student carries a firearm, dirk knife, bowie knife, dagger, metal knuckles or other deadly or dangerous weapon concealed on or about his or her person while on the property of the school.
6. When the student's presence in the school is detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of other students or staff.

Procedure for Expulsion:

Formal Hearing: When events or circumstances are such that a student faces expulsion from school, the following will occur:

1. The student and the parents or guardian shall be notified of:
 - a. The grounds of the proposed expulsion, and the date, time, and place where a full and fair hearing of the expulsion will be held.
 - b. The right to be represented by legal counsel.
 - c. The privilege against self-incrimination.
 - d. The right to confront and cross-examine adult witnesses who testify against him/ her and to submit evidence on his/her own behalf.
2. The student and the parent or guardian shall be provided a written copy of the charges.
3. The student's home district will be notified of the hearing and may have a representative in attendance at the hearing. If a student is expelled, the Board of Trustees of the student's home district will hold a hearing to determine if the student will be allowed to attend another school within their district.
4. Expelled students within the age of compulsory attendance fall under the purview of the Juvenile Corrections Act, and an authorized representative of the Board of Directors shall, within five (5) days, give a written notice of the expulsion to both the Middleton School District Board of Trustees and the Prosecuting Attorney of the county in which the student resides.

Vision Charter School of Middleton, Inc.
Draft Discipline of Students with Disabilities

All procedures set forth in the “Student Suspension” policy and the “Student Expulsion” policy will be followed when it is necessary to discipline students with disabilities as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The following additional procedures will also be adhered to when disciplining students with disabilities.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Ten-day disciplinary removal

School personnel may order a disciplinary removal of a student with disabilities for not more than ten (10) cumulative school days per infraction to the extent suspension would apply to students without disabilities. Cumulative suspensions, if over 10 school days in a school year must not constitute a significant change in placement.

In determining whether a significant change in placement has occurred, school personnel, through the multi-disciplinary team process, will review whether the student is subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern of exclusion because they cumulate to more than ten (10) school days in a school year, and because the length of each removal, the total amount of time the child is removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another indicate such a pattern of exclusion.

Any time a student is suspended for more than ten (10) school days in a school year the student will be provided services to the extent necessary to enable the student to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and appropriately advance toward achieving the goals set out on his or her IEP, as determined by school personnel, in consultation with the student’s special education teacher or as determined by the student’s IEP Team.

Forty-five day disciplinary removal

1. The Principal may order a change in placement of a student with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, as determined by the IEP Team, for the same amount of time that a student without a disability would be subject to discipline, but for not more than forty-five (45) days if:
 - a. The student carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises, or to a school function. “Weapon” for the purposes of this policy is defined as any weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury. This term does not include a pocket knife with a blade of less than two and one-half (2 1/2) inches in length.

- b. The student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function.
2. School personnel may request a change in placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting from a hearing officer for not more than forty-five days if it is determined by personnel that a student with a disability is substantially likely to cause injury to himself or herself, or to others in the current educational placement.
3. School personnel may petition the court for an injunction to remove any student with a disability from school or to change the student's current educational placement if personnel believe that maintaining the student in the current educational placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION PLAN

If a student with a disability is suspended for ten (10) school days or more in a school year, or placed in an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) days for disciplinary reasons, the following will occur within ten (10) days after taking the disciplinary action:

1. If school personnel have not conducted a functional behavioral assessment and implemented a behavioral intervention plan for the student prior to the behavior that resulted in the interim alternative educational setting, an IEP Team meeting will be convened to develop an assessment plan to address the behavior; or
2. If the student has a behavioral intervention plan, the IEP Team will review the plan and modify it, as necessary to address the behavior.
3. In subsequent removals in a school year of a student who already has a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plan, the IEP Team members can review the behavioral intervention plan and its implementation in light of the student's behavior, without a meeting, and must only meet if one or more of the team members believe that the plan or its implementation need modification.

MANIFEST DETERMINATION

Prior to submitting an expulsion recommendation to the Board of Directors for a student with a disability, the IEP Team will conduct a manifestation determination. A manifestation determination will occur within ten (10) school days after the date on which a decision was made to recommend the expulsion.

EXPULSION

If a student on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is expelled from school after a manifestation determination has found that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, educational services, consisting of services necessary to enable the student to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and appropriately advance toward achieving the goals set out in the student's IEP will be provided to that student at an alternative setting.

STUDENTS WITH SECTION 504 DISABILITIES

This section addresses disciplining students with disabilities as defined by Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act. For those students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the disciplinary procedures required by the IDEA will be followed. In the event a student has disabilities under both Section 504 and the IDEA, both policies shall be followed in determining appropriate disciplinary actions.

SUSPENSION

A student with a disability, as defined by Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, may be suspended for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days per incident.

Whenever a school considers suspending a student with a disability for more than ten (10) cumulative school days in a school year, a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) will be convened to determine if the cumulative suspensions constitute a significant change in placement by reviewing the following factors:

1. The length of each suspension;
2. The proximity of the suspension to one another; and
3. The total amount of time the student is excluded from school.

The MDT will consist of individuals who are knowledgeable about the student, the student's school history, the student's individual needs, the evaluation data, and the placement options. If the MDT determines that the exclusion would constitute a significant change in placement, the school will conduct a manifestation determination as set forth below.

EXPULSION

Prior to submitting an expulsion recommendation to the School Board for any student with a disability as defined by Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, an MDT will make a "manifestation determination." A manifestation determination involves a review of the student's misconduct, the student's disability and the services provided to determine:

1. Is the misconduct a manifestation, or result, of an inappropriate placement or educational program for the student?
2. Is the misconduct a manifestation, or result, of the student's disability?

In reviewing the questions set forth above, the MDT will review information regarding the student's disability that is recent enough to afford an understanding of the student's current behavior. In the absence of reasonably current information about the student's disability, the Principal will conduct or cause to be conducted additional evaluation(s) regarding the student's disability before making the manifestation determination. If either manifestation determination question answer is "yes," the student will not be expelled. However, the MDT may determine that a placement change is necessary for that student.

If the answers to both the questions set forth above are "no," the school may proceed with the recommendation of expulsion to the School Board in the same manner as for similarly-situated students who do not have disabilities.

If the student's parent/guardian disagree with the MDT's determination of the manifestation determination, a hearing may be requested with the Board of Directors. Although the parent/guardian may disagree with the manifestation determination findings, the student may be expelled after following the proper procedures. Educational services may cease after expulsion.

***Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc.
Draft Drug and Alcohol Use Policy***

Drug Free School Policy

In harmony with the federal regulations established by the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, Vision Charter School is committed to the concept of having a drug free student environment. It is our intent that programs and activities be planned and carried out by the professional staff that will enable the school to achieve this goal.

The primary focus of our program shall be educational in nature, with instruction geared to discourage student experimentation of any mood altering substance. A companion focus of this program shall be aimed to assist students who have made unacceptable choices regarding any controlled substance. A necessary part of the latter focus is an attitude among teachers and other staff members that one of our responsibilities is to assist those students who need help in overcoming their potentially addictive behaviors. We believe that it is possible to have a totally drug free environment in the school setting. If a student cannot, or will not, commit to responsible behavior to help achieve this goal, several sanctions may be imposed as a disciplinary measure. They include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Parent or guardian contacted
- b. Referral to assistance, such as counselors and/or health professionals
- c. Referral to an outside agency for chemical dependency assessment and/or treatment
- d. Suspension from school
- e. Expulsion from school

Referral Policy

1. When there is reasonable cause to believe that a student illegally uses, sells, distributes, or possesses drug paraphernalia, drugs, alcohol, or other mood-altering substances in school, on or adjacent to school property, or at school functions, the student will be subject to the disciplinary procedures contained in this regulation.

2. As used in this policy, reasonable cause shall mean the existence of specific observable evidence or behaviors that can be described.

- a. Observable behaviors may include chronic attendance problems, sleeping in class, erratic behavior, inappropriate comments, drop in grades, defiance of or disrespect toward authority, or motor coordination problems. Possession of alcoholic beverages, drugs or drug paraphernalia is also considered as evidence.
- b. Evidence shall include, but not be limited to, smell of alcohol, or other mood-altering substances, impaired speech, impaired coordination or other recognizable characteristics unusual for the particular student

3. Offenses for elementary students shall be cumulative from grades K-6 and offenses for secondary students shall be cumulative from grades 7-12.

Procedures

Vision Charter School will send staff to training to identify drug, alcohol, and mood-altering substance use. Staff will refer such information to the Principal through appropriate procedures. To develop reasonable cause for taking action the following procedures may be indicated.

1. Documented behaviors or indicators of drug, alcohol or mood-altering substance use.
2. Possession of alcohol or other illegal drugs
3. All procedures are to be performed with discretion and documented.
4. Refusal to submit to a request to any of the procedures may result in disciplinary action.

Elementary Disciplinary Procedure

1. First Offense for Use or Possession (Grades K-6)
 - a. Parent or guardian will be contacted.
 - b. Student will be suspended for 5 days.
 - c. Suspension may be modified if the student participates in and follows the recommendations of an assessment by a certified drug/alcohol agency. A release of information would also be required.
 - i. Law Enforcement Agency ~~may~~ shall be contacted.
 - ii. If the student does not complete the recommendations of the assessment, then the remainder of the 5-day suspension will go into effect.
2. Second Offense for Use or Possession (K-6)
 - a. Parent or guardian will be contacted.
 - b. Board of Directors may be petitioned for expulsion of student.
 - c. Law Enforcement Agency ~~may~~ shall be contacted
 - d. Child Protection Services (C.P.S.) may be contacted.
3. Third Offense for Use or Possession (K-6)
 - a. Parent or guardian will be contacted.
 - b. The student shall be suspended and the Board of Directors will be petitioned for expulsion of the student.
 - c. Law Enforcement Agency ~~may~~ shall be contacted.
 - d. Child Protection Services (C.P.S.) will be contacted.
4. First Offense for Selling or Delivering (Grades K-6)
 - a. Parent or Guardian will be contacted.
 - b. Law Enforcement Agency ~~will~~ shall be contacted.
 - c. The student will be suspended and the Board of Directors will be petitioned for expulsion of the student.
 - d. C.P.S. may be contacted.

Secondary Discipline Procedure

1. First Offense for Use or Possession (Grades 7-12)
 - a. Parent or guardian will be contacted.
 - b. Law Enforcement Agency ~~may~~ shall be contacted

- c. Student shall be suspended for 5 days.
 - i. Suspension may be modified if the student participates in and follows the recommendations of an assessment by a certified drug/alcohol agency. A release of information to the school district will also be required.
- 2. Second Offense for Use or Possession (Grades 7-12)
 - a. Parent or guardian will be contacted.
 - b. Law Enforcement Agency shall be contacted.
 - c. School Board may be petitioned for expulsion of the student.
- 3. Third Offense for Use or Possession (Grades 7-12)
 - a. Parent or guardian will be contacted.
 - b. The student will be suspended and the School Board will be petitioned for expulsion.
 - c. Law Enforcement Agency shall be contacted.
- 4. First Offense for Selling and/or Delivering Alcohol or Drugs (Grades 7-12)
 - a. Law Enforcement Agency shall be contacted.
 - b. Parent or guardian will be contacted.
 - c. The student shall be suspended and the School Board petitioned for expulsion.

Search and Seizure Philosophy

In order to maintain a quality educational atmosphere, preserve discipline and good order, and promote the safety and security of students and employees, all school property, including, but not limited to, buildings, equipment, buses, grounds, and other physical settings and equipment of Vision Charter School is under the direct jurisdiction and exclusive control of the Board of Directors and subject to search by members of the administrative staff. Therefore, students are advised that it is the policy of this school that members of the administrative staff have the authority to search the student lockers and all other school property over which the school has control at any time, without student consent, and without a search warrant. Members of the administrative staff also have the authority to search the personal property of students when reasonable under the circumstances. This authority to search school property, or personal property of the student when appropriate, is extended to members of the teaching staff who accompany students on out-of-town activities for school-related purposes at school expense.

Enforcement Procedures

Any student exhibiting inappropriate behavior that suggests “using” or “being under the influence” of controlled substances will be immediately escorted by an employee to the administrative office for interviewing and observation. Except in the case of an emergency, the student will not be left unattended and will not be allowed to leave the school premises.

The Principal or designee will refer the student to the law enforcement agency after a trained staff member, upon observing and/or interviewing the student, reasonably suspects that the student is using or under the influence of a controlled substance. All employees will cooperate fully with any law enforcement investigation of a violation of this policy, including but not limited to providing access to lockers, desks, and other school property, and providing oral and/or written statements regarding the relevant events.

The Principal and/or any other employee having observed the student's behavior will document his or her observations of the student; the documentation will be provided to the law enforcement agent, and a copy will be placed in the student's discipline record.

The procedures to enforce this policy are as follows:

1. Suspension/Expulsion: Students who violate this policy will be suspended by the Principal. Suspension for the first offense of this policy will be for three to five (3-5) days, unless extraordinary circumstances exist. The time period for suspension for the second or third offense will be determined at the discretion of the Principal and/or Board of Directors. The Principal will determine whether or not the suspension will be served in school or out of school. If deemed appropriate by the Principal, he or she may request that the board expel a student who has violated this policy for a second or third offense.
2. Referral to Law Enforcement: The student will be referred to the law enforcement agency.
3. Search and Seizure: A student's person and/or personal effects (e.g., purse, book bag, etc.) may be searched whenever a school official has reasonable cause to believe that the student is in possession of drug paraphernalia or drugs, including alcohol, tobacco or controlled substances. Any evidence of a violation of the law or this policy may be seized by the Principal or designee. Lockers and desks are school property and remain at all times under the control of the school; however, students are expected to assume full responsibility for the security of personal property.

***Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc.
Draft Computer Use Policy***

Student Computer Use Agreement

There is a need for full disclosure and understanding for the partnership between parents, children, and the school in regard to technology and its use. This agreement has been created to inform and provide knowledge of student use of the school's network/computers and Internet access and to ensure that all parties understand the areas of responsibility identified. Each child will need to have an agreement form signed and on file for use of the Internet.

Electronic Network Use Rules

School account holders are expected to act in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner, in accordance with the missions and purposes of the networks they use on the Internet, and the laws of the states and the United States. Students will be provided with a school atmosphere and procedures of student control/discipline that will assure a suitable learning environment, and students will learn to act as responsible and productive citizens with respect for civil rights and the role of the individual in a democracy. **Using the network is a privilege, not a right, and the privilege may be revoked at any time for unacceptable conduct.** Unacceptable conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Using the network for any illegal activity, including violation of copyright or other contracts.
- Using the network for financial or commercial gain.
- Degrading or disrupting equipment or system performance.
- Vandalizing the data of another user.
- Wastefully using finite resources.
- Gaining unauthorized access to resources or entities.
- Willfully and knowingly accessing pornographic or other inappropriate sites.
- Invading the privacy of individuals.
- Using an account owned by another user without authorization.
- Posting personal communications without the author's consent.
- Posting anonymous messages.
- Placing of unlawful or unlicensed information on a system.
- Using abusive or otherwise objectionable language in either public or private message.
- Sending of messages that are likely to result in the loss of recipients' work or systems.
- Sending of *chain letters* or *broadcast messages* to lists or individuals, or any other type of use that would cause congestion of the networks or otherwise interfere with the work of others.

Network Etiquette

- Be polite. Do not get abusive in your messages to others.
- Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language. Illegal activities are strictly forbidden.
- Do not reveal your personal address or phone number or that of other students or colleagues. Any student who receives unsolicited requests for personal information will immediately report that to the supervising teacher. That teacher will report this incident to appropriate authorities.

- Note that electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private. People who operate the system do have access to all mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to authorities.
- Do not use the network in such a way that you would disrupt the use of the network by other users.
- Information accessible via the network and Internet should be assumed to be private property and possibly copyrighted.

Security

Security on any computer is a high priority. If you feel you can identify a security problem on the Internet, you must notify faculty members. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users. Do not use another individual's account without written permission from that individual. Attempts to log onto the Internet with another person's identification without permission will result in cancellation of user privileges. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to the Internet.

**Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc.
Electronic Network Use Agreement**

School computer systems are for use by authorized individuals only. Any unauthorized access to these systems is prohibited and is subject to criminal and civil penalties under Federal Laws. Individuals using these systems are subject to having all activities on these systems monitored by system or security personnel. Anyone using these systems expressly consents to such monitoring. Prosecution and/or account termination may occur without warning.

The school believes that the benefits to educators and students from access to the Internet (in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration) far exceed any disadvantages of access. Ultimately, parent(s) and guardian(s) of minors are responsible for their child's behavior, and this includes use of the Internet. It is possible for all users of the world wide Internet (including your child) to access information that is intended for adults. Although the school has taken reasonable steps to ensure the Internet connection is used only for purposes consistent with the curriculum, the school can neither prevent the availability of, nor begin to identify, inappropriate material elsewhere on the Internet. Computer security cannot be made perfect, and it is likely that a determined student can make use of computer resources for inappropriate purposes.

I, _____ and _____
Parent name (please print) Student name (please print)

have read the Electronic Network Use Rules document, understand it, and agree to adhere to the principles and procedures detailed within. We understand and accept the conditions stated above and release from any liability the Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc. (the sponsoring school), its subcontractors, and employees.

I understand that my child is expected to use good judgment and follow the Student Computer Use Policy in making electronic contact with others. Furthermore, I have discussed the information contained in this policy with my child. Should my child breach the guidelines suggested, I understand that my child will lose all privileges on the Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc. network.

Parent Signature

Student Signature

Date

***Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc.
Draft Safety Policy***

PURPOSE

It is the policy of Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc. to take all practical steps to safeguard employees and students from accidents and to maintain an effective risk control program. The school believes that accident prevention and education go hand in hand. A comprehensive safety program will enhance the total education program. All employees have a primary responsibility for their own safety as well as the safety and well being of students and co-workers.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

The school will establish a safety committee, which will work to assure that all necessary safety precautions are established.

The composition of the Safety Committee will be as follows:

- a. Principal/Administrator (Chairperson)
- b. Designated Safety Officer (appointed by the Principal)
- c. President of the PFA

BUILDING/SAFETY INSPECTIONS

In the interest of students, personnel and the general public, Vision Charter School shall provide its own safety inspection program and will cooperate with other appropriate public agencies properly authorized to conduct safety inspections. Authorized agencies include the State of Idaho Department of Labor and Industrials Services, Southwest District Health, the school's insurance carriers, the Idaho State Department of Education, fire departments and duly authorized law enforcement agencies. Safety deficiencies cited by duly authorized safety inspectors will be promptly reported to the Idaho Public Charter School Commission upon receipt of written reports.

It shall be the duty of the Principal, in cooperation with the Safety Committee, to prepare a list of necessary repairs in order to keep the buildings in proper condition. The school will conduct its own safety program to include at least:

1. One school-wide building and grounds inspection by the Safety Committee shall be conducted each year.
2. Monthly fire and/or emergency drills shall be conducted.
3. Verification of an annual bus safety program for all bus drivers who transport Vision students.
4. An annual safety seminar, prior to the start of each school year, for all teachers, staff, and custodians.
5. A requirement that all accidents resulting in injury to personnel be promptly reported to the Principal. The Principal will work with the Charter School Commission and the insurance companies to ensure timely reporting of all injuries.

***Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc.
Draft Health Policy***

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Vision Public Charter School of Middleton, Inc. shall follow state guidelines to assist in preventing the spread of communicable diseases in the school setting. The school shall also follow the most current guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), currently entitled “Universal Precautions for Prevention of Transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus, Hepatitis B Virus, and Other Blood-borne Pathogens in Health-Care Settings.”

The Board of Directors has the power to exclude students and/or employees with contagious or infectious diseases from school. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) infections are not transmitted casually and, therefore, are not, in and of themselves, a reason to either remove a student or staff member from school or place the student in a restricted setting.

A. The following guidelines shall be followed when the Principal receives appropriate notification that a student, or employee, is diagnosed with an HIV or HBV infection:

1. Subject to obtaining appropriate written consent from the parents and/or guardian of an infected student (or from the infected student in the event they have reached the age of majority), or with the consent of the infected employee, each case will be considered individually by a team comprised of the following:

- a. The student’s or employee’s physician;
- b. A qualified Public Health Official who is responsible for such determinations;
- c. The student’s parents or guardians or the infected employee; and
- d. The Principal.

If requested by the employee, an additional team member shall consist of a representative of the employee.

2. An unrestricted setting is generally appropriate for students. In the event the infected student has a secondary infection which constitutes a recognized risk of transmission in the school setting, the team shall agree on an appropriate placement. If the student is determined to be handicapped, an appropriate placement will be made pursuant to Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in the least restrictive environment.

3. Since there is a potential for social isolation should an infected student’s condition become known to the general public, school personnel and all others involved in education the student will respect the student’s right to privacy and need for confidentiality. The privacy of an infected student’s school records will

Part 5 – Useful Information:

5.4 – Appendix – Sample Charter

be strictly maintained and there will be a concerted effort to limit the number of persons who are made aware of the student's condition to those persons necessary to assure the proper education of the student and to detect and avoid situations where the potential for transmission of the disease may increase. Any further dissemination of medical records or information shall require the specific consent of a parent and/or guardian or the student (if over the age of majority). The team shall periodically review the infected student's case to determine whether a modification of the student's education program is necessary or advisable. The team shall address ways within which the school may help anticipate and meet the needs of the infected student in the educational process.

4. An infected employee who is otherwise qualified to perform required tasks will continue with employment as long as he or she is able. In the event the infected employee has a secondary infection which constitutes a recognized risk of transmission in the school setting, the team shall attempt to identify reasonable accommodations which the school can make in an effort to allow the employee to continue with his or her employment. All usual regulations and policies regarding employee sick leave will be applied to the infected employee. The privacy right of the employee will be strictly maintained. Any further dissemination of medical records and information shall require the specific consent of the employee.

In the event it is determined that an individually tailored plan is necessary for any student or employee who is diagnosed with a communicable disease, the plan shall be designed to have minimal impact on the infected person's education or employment. Any official action will be consistent with applicable federal and state law.

C. In an effort to protect the privacy of a student or employee who may be diagnosed with a communicable disease, the Principal, without divulging the name of the infected person or the infected person's place of school or employment, shall notify the Board of Directors that the school has a student or employee who is diagnosed as having a communicable disease.

PREVENTION

Prevention measures against communicable diseases should be employed whenever reasonable. Reasonable prevention measures include requiring all students to wash their hands (either with soap and water or through the use of instant hand sanitizer) before lunch, after using the restroom, and after blowing their nose. Each classroom will have both a sink with running water and soap and an available supply of instant hand sanitizer for use by employees and students.

IMMUNIZATION

Parent(s) or guardian(s) of any child(ren) enrolled in Vision Charter School are required to provide school authorities with the immunization information regarding the child's immunity to certain childhood diseases in accordance with

Part 5 – Useful Information:

5.4 – Appendix – Sample Charter

Idaho Code, 39-4801, and Title 2, Chapter 15, *Immunization Requirements for Idaho School Children*, “Rules and Regulations of the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare”.

Proof of immunity must be received upon first admission and prior to attendance. If school authorities do not receive the immunization information prior to attendance, the child must be denied attendance until the information is received. The immunization information provided by the parent shall be in the form of a written statement or record signed by a physician or a physician’s representative. This statement must provide the vaccine type, number and date of each immunization the child had received or that the child is immune through prior illness (physician diagnosed measles or mumps disease or laboratory proof of immunity). Exemptions to these requirements shall be as stated in the law, Idaho Code 39-4802.

DEVELOPING PERFORMANCE GOALS AND MEASURES

Guidance for Charter Schools

Prepared by Margaret Lin¹

To set performance goals, schools will find it helpful to engage in *backward mapping* – asking themselves what they would like to have achieved several years from now. What would the school like a newspaper article or concerned parent to say about the school at that time? The school should then translate these broad hopes into specific goals reflecting both (1) **Educational Performance** and (2) **Organizational and Management Performance**.

For each goal, schools should develop specific indicators, assessment tools, baseline data, targets for performance, and strategies for attaining them. (See attached templates for assistance.)

Developing Sound Performance Goals and Measures

Charter school organizers and operators should define both **educational** and **organizational and management** goals for their school. This important exercise helps organizers begin to reflect on how they will define and measure success. It also helps existing schools foster a culture of professional accountability and sets the stage for the effective use of data for continuous school improvement.

However, to be meaningful and realistic, each school must reexamine and refine its goals and measures after enrolling students and gathering baseline achievement data early in their first year of operation.

This resource is designed to offer focused guidance in developing sound goals and measures – both educational and organizational – for inclusion in each school's accountability plan. These goals and measures should be carefully selected to be most useful to the charter school, the authorizing entity, and other stakeholders in the school's success.

The performance framework presented here asks each school to develop school-specific goals and measures for:

¹ Margaret Lin is a Senior Associate at the National Association of Charter School Authorizers. This guidance was originally developed for charter authorizers to provide to schools, and appears in customized form in *The Charter School Accountability Handbook for Mayor-sponsored Charter Schools*, 3rd ed. (City of Indianapolis, 2004). Many of the concepts, definitions and principles in these pages are adapted from the following sources: *Measuring Up: How Chicago's Charter Schools Make Their Missions Count*, by Margaret Lin (Leadership for Quality Education, 2000); *Guidelines for Writing Charter School Accountability Plans, 2001-2002* (Charter Schools Institute, State University of New York), http://www.newyorkcharters.org/charterny/act_guide.html; and "Some Expectations Regarding the Contents of Charter School Accountability Plans," District of Columbia Public Charter School Board

- 1) **Educational Performance** – addressing aspects of student learning that demonstrate the school’s mission; and
- 2) **Organizational and Management Performance** – addressing matters such as finances, facilities and other operational management; leadership, governance and personnel; attendance and retention rates; strength of community; parent satisfaction and market demand.

While it is important that charter schools have enough goals to measure progress relating to their mission, too many goals can become difficult to manage and measure. In addition, not all goals that your school may develop for internal guidance and strategic planning are necessary for external accountability purposes. Thus, for incorporation in each school’s accountability plan, we recommends developing no more than ten to twelve unique goals, with the majority focusing on educational performance. A much smaller number of goals would also be acceptable. Each school, however, should use its own discretion to determine a suitable number of goals based on its individual situation.

Note: The following guidance focuses particularly on developing strong *educational* goals and measures for your accountability plan. This task demands particular attention because educational performance indicators are often more challenging to state in objective, externally meaningful terms than are measures that focus on organizational and management performance. However, the principles for developing both educational and organizational goals and measures are very similar. Thus, to the extent applicable, you should follow the guidance in these pages for developing your organizational and management goals and measures as well.

General Criteria for Educational and Organizational Goals

Goals should be SMART:

- **Specific** (and, for educational goals, tied to learning **Standards**). A well-defined goal must be specific, clearly and concisely stated, and easily understood. Educational goals should be tied to learning standards that specify **what students should know and be able to do**, for each subject or content area and for each grade, age, or other grouping level. Equally important, educational goals should be developed with solid knowledge of students’ **baseline achievement levels**.
- **Measurable**. A goal should be tied to measurable results to be achieved. Measurement is then simply an assessment of success or failure in achieving the goal.
- **Ambitious and Attainable**. A goal should be challenging yet attainable and realistic. Educational goals should be based on a well-informed assessment of your school’s capacities and your students’ baseline achievement levels.
- **Reflective of Your Mission**. A goal should be a natural outgrowth of your school mission, reflecting the school’s values and aspirations.

- **Time-Specific with Target Date.** A well-conceived goal should specify a time frame or target date for achievement. We suggest setting short-term (annual) and long-term (3-5 year) targets for accomplishing goals.

Definitions of Key Terms in Goal-Setting²

***Remember: while these definitions pertain specifically to educational goals, they are also applicable to organizational and management goals.*

To develop adequate learning goals and measures, schools should begin with a clear understanding of a few essential terms:

Goal: A clear, measurable statement of what the school will accomplish with its students after a certain length of time attending the school.

Indicator: A clear statement of how the school will know that it has achieved a goal, without necessarily detailing specific assessments or measures.

(Examples: "Students will demonstrate reading proficiency at or above grade level" or "Students will achieve annual growth that is sufficient for them to reach proficiency on state standards by the time they exit our school.")

Standard: A clear, measurable statement of what students will be expected to know (a *content* standard) or be able to do (a *performance* or *skill* standard) at a given point in their development, usually each year and at graduation. Allows monitoring of progress toward an ultimate *goal*.

(Standards are usually defined grade-by-grade and subject-by-subject, and are thus more specific than – but necessary to support – overarching school goals.)

Benchmark: A clear, measurable statement of what the school will accomplish with its students at a given point in the school's development, usually each year or at more frequent intervals. Allows monitoring of progress toward an ultimate *goal*.

Assessment (sometimes also "*measure*"): A method, tool or system to evaluate and demonstrate student progress toward – or mastery of – a particular learning standard or goal.

(Examples: A standardized test, or a portfolio-judging system)

Measure: An application of an assessment that defines progress toward or attainment of a goal

(Example: "Percent of students at State Assessment performance levels, disaggregated by student subgroup" or "Value-added scale score growth for each student.")

Assessments – and by extension, measures – should be *valid*, *reliable*, and demonstrate *scoring consistency*:

- **Valid:** Assesses the skill or knowledge it is intended to assess
- **Reliable:** Provides consistent results when taken repeatedly by the student at a given point in his/her development, as well as by other students at the same point in development.
- **Scoring Consistency:** Produces consistent scores, ratings, results or responses when a particular assessment tool, scoring guide or rubric is used by different evaluators to assess the same student performance or work sample. (Often called *interrater reliability*)
- **Target:** An application of an assessment or measure that indicates the level of performance that will constitute success over a time period.

(Example: "90% of students at Successful Charter School will achieve annual

² Some of these terms may be defined or used differently elsewhere in the education community. This page is meant to provide a consistent set of working definitions for schools to use in developing accountability plans.

Essential Principles for Developing Sound Educational Goals and Measures

- Your mandate as the operator of a charter school is not just to teach well but also to **demonstrate objectively** – in ways that are **clear, understandable** and **credible** to a variety of external audiences – that you are doing so. Thus, you must measure and report educational progress precisely and extensively.
- Distinguish between **goals** and **measures**. Goals are the starting point, but require valid, reliable ways to measure and demonstrate that you have achieved them.
- Make sure that your goals are **clear, specific** and **measurable**. They should also be **challenging** yet **achievable**.
- Your measures for attainment of those goals should describe **how you will assess progress**, and **how much progress will constitute success**.
- Educational goals must be connected to a well-defined set of learning standards for both **content** (what students should know) and **performance** (what students should be able to do). Such standards should exist for **every subject or content area** and **each grade, age or other grouping level** in the school. Focus on **outcomes** and **evidence of learning**, not inputs. For example, participation rates or the number of hours spent on an activity are *not* sufficient measures of success. Participation and investment of time are necessary first steps, but they are inputs, not **demonstrable** measures of learning and accomplishment.
- In developing goals for your accountability plan, focus on **what’s most important**. No more than eight to ten clear, well-chosen and carefully measured educational goals should allow you to provide a convincing story of your progress and achievements – and will be more effective than listing a score of vague, trivial, redundant or hard-to-measure indicators.
- The measures you develop to assess achievement of each goal, if not based on standardized assessments, should be demonstrably **valid** and **reliable**. (The “Framework for Creating Unique Learning Measures” provided later in this section will provide some help in developing validity and reliability in assessments.)

A Note on Defining Standards: Milestones on the Path to Broader School Goals

Educational goals must be tied to clear content and performance standards specifying what you expect your students to know and be able to do in order to graduate or be promoted to the next level. These standards need only to be referenced in your accountability plan, but they form the foundation of your school’s education program. As such, selecting and developing grade-by-grade, subject-by-subject standards is an essential component of accountability planning that goes hand-in-hand with broader goal-setting and answers the following question: *do our standards embody the expectations necessary to achieve our mission and reach our goals?*

Of course, many of your school standards will be state standards. However, most schools have important aims beyond the state requirements, and developing these supplemental standards is a technically challenging task. It usually consists of several steps, including:

1. Articulating desired characteristics of “educated” students at a general level – or setting your school’s overarching goals;
2. Breaking these general qualities and goals into more concrete graduation or exit standards; and
3. Benchmarking these exit standards down into specific and measurable grade-age-level content and performance standards.³

Practical Steps for Developing Sound Educational Goals and Measures

- **Define a set of goals** that describe what success will look like at your school. These goals should be carefully selected to reflect the **breadth and depth of your mission**.

Defining Goals: Some Helpful Guiding Questions

Ask the following critical questions when defining your school’s goals:

- *How will you know if your school is succeeding (or not)?*
- *What will be important characteristics of “educated students” at your school?*
- *What will students learn, know, understand and be able to do after a certain period of time, before promotion to the next grade level, or before graduation from our school?*
- *What should your graduates permanently possess as a result of their time in your school?*

- Outline your goals in **precise, declarative sentences**. Example: “All students at the Excelencia Charter School will be proficient readers and writers of Spanish within four years of enrolling.”
- Identify at least **one and possibly multiple measures** to assess and demonstrate progress toward each goal. These measures must indicate both (1) the **level of performance** you will expect your school or students to achieve, and (2) **how much progress will indicate success**. (It is not sufficient to say you’ll administer a certain type of assessment; you must explain how you expect your students to perform on it to demonstrate progress and success.)
- You may develop different types of measures to assess (1) absolute achievement; (2) student growth or gains; or (3) achievement compared to other schools. (The box below, entitled “**Example: Multiple Measures Applied to a Single Goal**,” provides an example of different ways to measure achievement of the same goal.)
- For every goal, choose means of assessment that make **non-attainment** of the goal as **objectively apparent** as success. That is, the assessment(s) should tell you (and external audiences) immediately whether you have achieved a particular goal or

³ Adapted from *Accountability for Student Performance: An Annotated Resource Guide for Shaping an Accountability Plan for Your Charter School* (Charter Friends National Network, 2nd ed., 2001), p. 5, <http://www.charterfriends.org/accountability.doc>

not. For example, if one goal of your school is to develop your students into skilled readers, it would not be persuasive to rely on a survey of parents' opinions of their children's reading skills to show that your students did indeed become skilled readers. You would need to select some type of **externally credible assessment** to measure and demonstrate students' reading proficiency.

- Make sure that your measures of student learning are based on knowledge of your students' **baseline achievement levels**. Without such knowledge, your measures will not be meaningful or realistic.
- Set **long-term goals** as well as **intermediate (typically annual) benchmarks** to assess progress. Administer assessments corresponding to this timeline to provide longitudinal data over the term of the charter.
- To have time to counter learning deficits that students may have upon entering your school, you may consider setting certain goals for students who have been enrolled in your school for a **certain period of time**, such as "students who have been in the school for at least three years."
- For every measure you develop, ask yourself, "*Will this measure be readily understandable and **credible** to someone who doesn't spend a day or a week in our school getting to know us?*" Remember, your school will be judged by the media, community leaders and the public at large, in addition to your authorizer and parents. For measures not based on standardized tests, establishing external credibility typically requires demonstrating **validity** and **reliability**. (The "Framework for Creating Unique Learning Measures" at the end of this section offers an overview of one way for schools to do this.) Credibility – through valid and reliable measures – should be an aim for all goals you develop. Be sure to establish this.
- Understand **what data** you will need to gather to support each measure. Remember, *if you have no data, you have no case* proving your school's achievements. Likewise, if you have insufficient data, you have an insufficient case.

Selecting Assessments: Some Helpful Guiding Questions

Ask the following critical questions when selecting or developing assessments:

- *How will we ensure and demonstrate that we meet or exceed these expectations? How will we measure and report – clearly and concisely – whether our students are reaching each learning standard?*
- *What are all the characteristics of a student performance or sample of work that meet a particular standard? Exceed the standard? Approach the standard? Do not meet the standard?*
- *Does this assessment enable all students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understandings relevant to the given standard?*
- *Is the assessment **valid** – does it measure the skills or knowledge we intend it to measure?*
- *Is the assessment **reliable** – does it provide consistent results when taken repeatedly by the same student at a given point in his/her development? Does it provide consistent results when taken by other students at the same point in development?*
- *Is there a clearly written scoring tool or rubric that is consistent with the purpose of the*

assessment?

- Do our assessment tools, scoring guides, or rubrics pass the test of **interrater reliability**, or **scoring consistency and accuracy**? That is, do different assessors or evaluators use them in the same way, resulting in consistent responses when scoring the same student performance or work sample?

Tip: Schools can achieve interrater reliability by undertaking an audit-like process to pilot and refine assessment tools – for example, double- or triple-scoring every fifth sample of student work, comparing the scoring responses given by the different evaluators, and revising or clarifying the scoring tool as needed to eliminate inconsistent ratings. (See the examples in the box above.)

- Are our assessment tools or scoring guides user-friendly? Are the instructions and procedural explanations for teachers or other assessors clear?
- Is the assessment feasible to administer?

There is no single best way to measure achievement of a particular goal. As charter schools, you are free to choose measures that you prefer, provided that they are also meaningful and persuasive to external audiences.

Double-Checking the Quality and Integrity of Learning Measures: Some Helpful Guiding Questions

Ask the following critical questions when selecting or developing assessments:

- Are our assessments aligned with our standards and curriculum?
- Are the standards and curriculum aligned?
- Are the knowledge and skills we test important to teach and test?
- Does our school adequately teach the knowledge and skills being tested?
- Do our assessments accurately measure attainment of the standards?
- Do our standards and assessments show both breadth and depth?
- Do our standards and assessments demand that students demonstrate more than simple recall?
- Do our standards and assessments represent a worthwhile educational experience?
- Are the standards and assessments free of gender, cultural and other biases?

The following example shows how three different measures might be applied to a single learning goal. (These goals could be developed by one school or by three different schools that have the same goal.) Note that each measure describes **how progress will be assessed and how much progress will constitute success**. The third measure allows the school to assess skills beyond those measured on standardized tests, and would thus require some demonstration of validity and reliability or be used in addition to externally validated assessments.⁴

⁴ Adapted from *Guidelines for Writing Charter School Accountability Plans, 2001-2002* (Charter Schools Institute, State University of New York), p. 4, http://www.newyorkcharters.org/charterny/act_guide.html

Example: Multiple Measures Applied to a Single Goal

Goal: “All students at the Successful Charter School will become proficient readers of English within three years of enrolling at our school.”

Possible Measures:

- “Students at the Successful Charter School will improve their performance on the reading portion of the State ABC Test by at least 5% per year, on average.”
(Measuring growth – Note: The proposed rate of improvement must be sufficient, based on information collected through baseline data, to meet the ultimate target goal in the specified time frame)
- “Students at the Successful Charter School will perform at a level higher than their peers in the Successful School District on the English & Language Arts portion of Required State Examination in all grades, as demonstrated by a greater percentage of students passing and by a higher overall average student score.”
(Assessing comparative performance)
- “All students at the Successful Charter School will read aloud and discuss an essay of literary significance before a panel of teachers and outside experts at the end of their 8th and 10th-grade years, achieving a “Proficient” or higher rating from the panel for each of the following skills: elocution, comprehension and analysis.”
(Performance-based assessment)

“From Qualitative to Quantitative”: A Framework for Creating Unique Learning Measures⁵

Following is a six-step framework for designing **valid, reliable** measures of learning in areas not typically assessed by standardized tests. Schools may use this framework to create their own externally credible measures in similarly difficult-to-measure areas.

⁵ From *Measuring Up: How Chicago’s Charter Schools Make Their Missions Count*, by Margaret Lin (Leadership for Quality Education, 2000), pp 32-33.

Six-Step Framework for Creating Unique Learning Measures

1. Define Clear Standards
<p>Define: What are our ultimate goals for our students and graduates? What do we expect them to know and be able to do before promotion to the next grade level or graduation?</p> <p>Have the standards externally reviewed by experts and community members (e.g., standards and subject-area experts, curriculum specialists, university professors, other educators, school district administrators, school governing board members, parents).</p>
2. Design Assessments Aligned with Those Standards
<p>Define: How can students demonstrate they have reached our standards?</p>
3. Develop Scoring Tools or Rubrics
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. For every assessment designed to measure attainment of a particular standard, first define: What are the essential features of a student performance or sample of work that <i>meets</i> the standard? That <i>exceeds</i> the standard? That <i>does not meet</i> the standard? That <i>approaches</i> the standard? b. Create a scoring tool or guide that rates student performance or work by applying these criteria. c. Assign point values to express students' overall attainment or non-attainment of the standard (for example: 4 = exceeds standard; 3 = meets standard; 2 = approaching standard; 1 = does not meet standard). d. Train teachers and other assessors to use the scoring guides or rubrics consistently.
4. Test the Reliability of Assessments
<p>Pilot assessments and scoring tools repeatedly to ensure scoring consistency and accuracy across different evaluators and assessment occasions. Try an audit-like process in piloting and refining an assessment – for example, double- or triple-score every fifth sample of student work, compare scoring responses, and revise or clarify the scoring tool as needed to eliminate inconsistent ratings. Use exemplars – samples of student work that should be scored at varying levels – to help achieve consistent interpretation and usage of scoring guides.</p>
5. Translate Student Scores into Aggregate Measures
<p>After ensuring the validity and reliability of an assessment, translate student scores on the assessment into aggregate measures: What percent of all students met, exceeded, approached, or did not meet the standard?</p>
6. Communicate Results
<p>Communicate student progress toward the standards by reporting individual and aggregate growth, using students' beginning or baseline performance as the point of comparison. Communicate school results through multiple avenues, such as community meetings and annual or more frequent reports for parents, the public, and the media.</p>

Examples of Measures Created through this Framework

Examples of goals and assessment processes developed by charter schools in Chicago, IL following this framework include:

Narrative Writing: Writing Appraisal System

North Kenwood-Oakland Charter School (NKO)

Performance Goal:

“80% of our students will demonstrate mastery in narrative writing by meeting or exceeding the minimum grade-level standard score for work assessed according to the seven-category Writing Appraisal System.”

Establishing Reliability in Assessment:

North Kenwood-Oakland, an elementary charter school in Chicago, has created a unique system to assess its students’ writing skills. The assessment team that developed NKO’s Writing Appraisal System was composed of writing assessment specialists, NKO faculty, and Literacy Coordinators (teachers) from eight other public schools in Chicago in the Center for School Improvement’s (CSI, affiliated with the University of Chicago) network. Together, this team examined accountability protocols developed earlier by CSI as well as from across the country, paying particular attention to urban school district and charter school writing assessment materials.

Drawing upon these models, the assessment team created scoring guides to gauge student progress toward NKO Charter School’s Unique Writing Standards as well as state and district standards. The team then repeatedly scored samples of student writing collected from the eight schools in CSI’s network, compared their scores to find variances, and revised the rubrics as needed to eliminate significant discrepancies. To build consistent understanding and usage of the rubrics, the team used exemplars – samples of student work illustrating distinct levels of achievement that should be scored accordingly. They repeated this exercise several times throughout the Project year until they had confidence in the reliability of the assessment instruments.

Oral Expression

North Lawndale College Preparatory Charter High School (NLCP)

Performance Goal:

“Within two years, 75% of our students will master speaking effectively in a variety of academic and professional settings.”

Establishing Reliability in Assessment:

North Lawndale College Prep, a charter high school in Chicago, has established both internal and external consistency and reliability in tools to assess its students’ skills in Oral Expression. First, in training faculty and student judges in the use of the rubric, the school uses videotaped Oral Presentations by students from other schools. Teams of assessors of three people each (two faculty members and one student) watch a taped presentation, score it and then compare and discuss individual scoring. They repeat this with two additional taped presentations.

Having each Oral Presentation assessed by three people provides an ongoing check on consistency, reliability and fairness. Significant scoring variances within any three-member scoring team are discussed and resolved by the team. If necessary, the scoring team can request assistance from one of the two English faculty members to resolve a scoring difference.

The school also uses a team of external expert assessors to evaluate randomly selected, taped Oral Presentations. This team consists largely of speech and communications faculty of local colleges and universities and possibly the Speaking, Arguing and Writing Program at Mt. Holyoke College. Scores produced by the external assessors are compared with those of NLCP's internal team, and scoring variances are resolved by refining or clarifying the assessment tool.

Developing Organizational and Management Performance Goals and Measures

In addition to goals and measures for student learning, your accountability plan will require a few goals and measures pertaining to **Organizational and Management Performance**. Many of the general principles and steps outlined above are useful to follow in developing these indicators, though the framing question to guide this task is:

In addition to educational measures, what evidence will show that your school is an effective, well-run institution?

This will be your opportunity to demonstrate success in areas of organizational and operational performance such as (but not limited to):

- Financial management and performance;
- Strength and stability of leadership, governance and personnel;
- Facilities and other operational management;
- Enrollment, attendance and retention;
- Staffing and professional development;
- Parent and community involvement; and
- Parent and student satisfaction.

For most schools, developing three to four school-specific goals for organizational performance should be sufficient. The following box offers examples of organizational goals and possible related measures.

Examples of Organizational and Management Performance Goals and Measures

Goal: "Teachers and staff will be highly qualified, demonstrate high expectations for all students, and have a positive attitude toward the school and their colleagues."

Measures: *"90% or more of the teaching staff will have at least a bachelor's degree in the subject they teach and at least two years of teaching experience. The teacher retention rate will be at least 90% each year, not including departures for health or family reasons. All teachers will consistently earn satisfactory ratings on regular classroom observations by the Principal and Academic Director. The school will earn satisfactory ratings from at least 90% of the faculty on a survey administered each semester to assess professional satisfaction. At least 90% of parents responding to an annual survey will indicate satisfaction with teachers at our school."*

Goal: "Families will see themselves as partners in their children's education and will be active in the life of the school."

Measures: *"At least 80% of parents will participate in report card pick-up days and quarterly parent-teacher conferences, as recorded on sign-in sheets. At least 80% of parents will regularly attend student exhibitions, performances, academic fairs and other showcase events, as recorded on sign-in sheets. At least 20% of parents will volunteer at least 15 hours per year for the school, and at least 50% of parents will volunteer at least 10 hours per year."*

GENERAL TEMPLATE FOR ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN⁶

Accountability Plan for _____ (school name)

Mission Statement	<i>The mission of our charter school is to... (Brief, jargon-free statement of the school's purpose and broad aims)</i>
Performance Goal	<i>What will our school accomplish? (Precise, declarative statement tied to a specified timeframe or length of attendance)</i>
Performance Indicators	<i>How will we know that we have achieved this goal?</i>
Assessment Tools and Measures	<i>How will we measure achievement of this goal, using mandated assessments and/or school-specific assessments (such as portfolios, juried performances)?</i>
Attachments	<i>Attachments to illustrate the performance goal and assessments. (Note and attach relevant school-developed assessments and/or assessment tools.)</i>
Rationale for Goal and Measures	<i>Why is this goal important to our mission, and why is our chosen method of assessment appropriate and useful for measuring performance toward this goal? (2-3 sentences)</i>
Assessment Reliability and Scoring Consistency	<i>How will we demonstrate both the <u>reliability</u> and <u>scoring consistency</u> of the assessment(s) we plan to use, if non-standardized?</i>
Strategies for Attainment	<i>What are our strategies (curricular, instructional, assessment, organizational, operational) for attaining this goal? (Include designation of point person)</i>
Baseline Data	<i>What is our beginning data point?</i>

⁶ Originally developed for *The Charter School Accountability Handbook for Mayor-sponsored Charter Schools*, 3rd ed (City of Indianapolis, 2004).

1st-Year Target*	<p><i>What do we expect to achieve by the end of our first year? (Set your Rating 3 ["Meets standard"] at a level that you would consider on target for your first year.)</i></p> <p><u>Rating 1</u> (Does not meet standard):</p> <p><u>Rating 2</u> (Approaching standard):</p> <p><u>Rating 3</u> (Meets standard):</p> <p><u>Rating 4</u> (Exceeds standard):</p>
4th-Year Target*	<p><i>What do we expect to achieve by the end of our fourth year? (Set your Rating 3 ["Meets standard"] at a level that you would consider on target for your fourth year.)</i></p> <p><u>Rating 1</u> (Does not meet standard):</p> <p><u>Rating 2</u> (Approaching standard):</p> <p><u>Rating 3</u> (Meets standard):</p> <p><u>Rating 4</u> (Exceeds standard):</p>
Annual Progress	<p><i>What progress have we made toward this goal this year?</i></p>

- SAMPLE COMPLETED TEMPLATE PAGE FOLLOWS -

SAMPLE GOAL SUBMISSION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

Accountability Plan for the New Academy Charter School

Mission Statement	<i>The mission of our charter school is to cultivate in youth of the Riverside and Brickyards neighborhoods a deep appreciation and understanding of mathematics and science, and to develop in them the academic and social skills and character qualities essential to be active community members, responsible citizens and successful individuals</i>
Performance Goal	<p><i>What will our school accomplish? (Precise, declarative statement tied to a specified timeframe or length of attendance)</i></p> <p>Graduating students will have a plan for their future and the confidence, skills and preparation to pursue it.</p>
Performance Indicators	<p><i>How will we know that we have achieved this goal?</i></p> <p>Students will demonstrate that they have thought about their interests and aptitudes, have researched necessary steps to achieve their goals, and have outlined a realistic path for taking those steps.</p>
Assessment Tools and Measures	<p><i>How will we measure achievement of this goal, using mandated assessments and/or school-specific assessments (such as portfolios, juried performances)?</i></p> <p>Beginning in the 8th grade, students will develop a career plan that is revised annually. The career plan will be evaluated for soundness by the school counselor and each student's teacher-advisor, using a tool that we have developed for this purpose.</p>
Attachments	<p><i>Attachments to illustrate the performance goal and assessments. (Note and attach relevant school-developed assessments and/or assessment tools. If a school-developed assessment or tool is still under development, note this here along with the date when it will be ready for submission, and submit it once it is developed.)</i></p> <p>Our school-developed tool for evaluating student career plans is attached [Example response only – no tool is attached to this sample.]</p>
Rationale for Goal and Measures	<p><i>Why is this goal important to our mission, and why is our chosen method of assessment appropriate and useful for measuring performance toward this goal? (2-3 sentences)</i></p> <p>Developing in students the self-knowledge and skills to plan realistically for their futures is essential to our mission. We are committed to preparing our students to succeed beyond our doors. Individual student career plans, thoughtfully revised each year with faculty counseling, will teach students to engage in self-reflection and research that will equip them to follow a plan throughout their lives – adjusting as necessary, but continuously focused on meaningful and realistic goals.</p>
Assessment Reliability and Scoring Consistency	<p><i>How will we demonstrate both the <u>reliability</u> and <u>scoring consistency</u> of the assessment(s) we plan to use, if non-standardized?</i></p> <p>The school counselor and all teachers (who also serve as advisors to assigned groups of students) will be trained to use the tool that we have developed for evaluating student career plans. From the first set of career plans developed in 2004-2005, we will identify exemplars representing distinct levels of achievement (Excellent, Good, Fair, Needs Improvement) that should be rated accordingly, and will use these to help guide and build consistency in evaluation. Guided by the exemplars, the counselor and teachers will repeatedly evaluate a sample set of actual career plans developed in 2004-2005 (including written comments and oral feedback as well as a numeric score for each plan), comparing their scores and comments to identify variances, and revising the evaluation tool as needed.</p>

	to eliminate significant discrepancies We will repeat these "practice evaluations" as needed until we are confident in the reliability and consistent usage of the evaluation tool.
Strategies for Attainment	<p><i>What are our strategies (curricular, instructional, assessment, organizational, operational) for attaining this goal? (Include designation of point person)</i></p> <p>The school will provide career interest and aptitude inventories for students The school counselor will work with students and teacher-advisors to support the development of annual plans beginning in the eighth grade. The Academic Director will oversee these strategies.</p>
Baseline Data	<p><i>What is our beginning data point?</i></p> <p>Career plans from the 2004-2005 school year, which will be finalized in May 2005.</p>
1st-Year Target	<p><i>What do we expect to achieve by the end of our first year? (Set your Rating 3 ["Meets standard"]) at a level that you would consider on target for your first year.)</i></p> <p><u>Rating 1 (Does not meet standard)</u>: Fewer than 70% of students in the 8th grade and higher have individual career plans that are realistic, well-considered and well-developed for their grade levels (earning a rating of "Good" or "Excellent" according to our evaluation tool).</p> <p><u>Rating 2 (Approaching standard)</u>: 70% to 84% of students in the 8th grade and higher have individual career plans that are realistic, well-considered and well-developed for their grade levels (earning a rating of "Good" or "Excellent" according to our evaluation tool)</p> <p><u>Rating 3 (Meets standard)</u>: 85% of students in the 8th grade and higher have individual career plans that are realistic, well-considered and well-developed for their grade levels (earning a rating of "Good" or "Excellent" according to our evaluation tool).</p> <p><u>Rating 4 (Exceeds standard)</u>: 86% or more students in the 8th grade and higher have individual career plans that are realistic, well-considered and well-developed for their grade levels (earning a rating of "Good" or "Excellent" according to our evaluation tool).</p>
4th-Year Target	<p><i>What do we expect to achieve by the end of our fourth year? (Set your Rating 3 ["Meets standard"]) at a level that you would consider on target for your fourth year.)</i></p> <p><u>Rating 1 (Does not meet standard)</u>: Fewer than 80% of students in the 8th grade and higher have individual career plans that are realistic, well-considered and well-developed for their grade levels (earning a rating of "Good" or "Excellent" according to our evaluation tool).</p> <p><u>Rating 2 (Approaching standard)</u>: 80% to 94% of students in the 8th grade and higher have individual career plans that are realistic, well-considered and well-developed for their grade levels (earning a rating of "Good" or "Excellent" according to our evaluation tool).</p> <p><u>Rating 3 (Meets standard)</u>: 95% of students in the 8th grade and higher have individual career plans that are realistic, well-considered and well-developed for their grade levels (earning a rating of "Good" or "Excellent" according to our evaluation tool).</p> <p><u>Rating 4 (Exceeds standard)</u>: 96% or more students in the 8th grade and higher have individual career plans that are realistic, well-considered and well-developed for their grade levels (earning a rating of "Good" or "Excellent" according to our evaluation tool).</p>
Annual Progress	<i>What progress have we made toward this goal this year?</i>

Sample Authorizer Questions

Petitioners and authorizer need to establish a good working relationship. While the petitioners have been working on their petition for months, this may be the first time the authorizers have seen the petition. Because of this, the questions asked may seem tedious. However, it is important for the petitioners to answer questions as thoroughly as possible and with respect to the members of the authorized chartering entity. Below are a number sample questions authorizers may ask:

- Can you give me a brief biography of yourself?
- Do you have enough expertise on your board to govern a charter school? For instance, do you have an accountant, a business owner, an attorney, any teachers (retired or not), someone with real estate experience, someone with experience working with governmental entities, etc.
- Why do you want to open a charter school?
- Do you have a completed Sufficiency Review from the State Department of Education? Have you supplied this review to our staff?
- Have you and our staff come to consensus on the content of the petition? If there are any outstanding issues, please explain why you have chosen not to make the recommended amendments.
- Have you purchased your curriculum or developed it yourself?
 - If it is purchased, what is the name of the company? Describe your experience with this curriculum.
 - Tell us more about the curriculum and how it will be delivered.
 - Has this curriculum been proven in other areas?
 - Can you provide us with any data about the success of the curriculum?
- Where will your charter school be located?
 - Has any land been donated to you?
 - Will your site location require any improvements?
 - Have you considered site improvement costs in your budget?
- Do you have a permanent facility or will you be leasing?
- Will you be providing transportation for any of your students?
- Will you be providing lunch for any of your students?
- How many students do you expect in your first year? Can you make adjustments to your budget if you don't meet your expected enrollment?
- Will you be using preferences for students? Do your preferences meet the requirements set out in Idaho Code?
- Have you made plans for Special Education students?
- What is your teacher to student ratio?
- When will you be hiring an administrator and teachers?
- Are there other charter schools in your district?
- What are some of the assumptions that you used in your budget? For instance, have any materials been donated to you? Do you anticipate any professional services will be donated?
- Is your budget realistic?

- Have you reviewed the beginning budgets of other charter schools with similar enrollment?
- Will you be providing any extra curricular activities?
- Do you plan to contract for any services such as transportation, lunch, or special education?
- Have you contacted the entities with whom you plan to contract?
- Do you have a good working relationship with the authorizer's staff and/or your local school district?
- Have you read and do you understand the laws and rules that govern charter schools in Idaho?

Sufficiency Review by the Idaho Department of Education
Elements Required of a Petition to Establish a Charter School

Pursuant to the new public charter school rules adopted by the State Board of Education (3-10-05), petitioners are required to submit their proposed draft petition to establish a charter school to the State Department of Education for the purpose of determining whether the petition complies with statutory requirements. This must occur prior to the petition being submitted to an authorized chartering entity (IDAPA 08.02.04. 200.03).

After a sufficiency review has been conducted by the State Department of Education, the petition may be submitted to an authorized chartering entity for review with a copy of the review.

Upon approval by an authorized chartering entity, a Tracking Form must be completed, signed, and attached to the approved charter and a copy submitted to the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education.

Charter School Name:
Authorized Chartering Entity:
Date submitted to State Department of Education for Sufficiency Review:
Date of Review:

Items with no recommendations are sufficiently described in the petition.

In the column to the left, list the page number of the petition that addresses the following elements.	Idaho Code Title 33 Chapter 52
Describe the school's educational program and how it will identify: a) What it means to be an “educated person” in the 21st century; and b) How learning best occurs.	5205 (3) (a)
Comments by SDE	
Identify the school's goals and how all Educational Thoroughness Standards (as defined in I.C. § 33-1612, Idaho Code) shall be fulfilled.	5205 (3) (a)
Comments by SDE	

In the column to the left, list the page number of the petition that addresses the following elements.	Idaho Code Title 33 Chapter 52
Identify measurable student educational standards that describe the extent to which all students of the charter school will demonstrate they have attained the skills and knowledge specified as goals in the school's educational program.	5205 (3) (b)
Comments by SDE	
Identify the method by which student progress is to be measured in meeting the school's student educational standards.	5205 (3) (c)
Comments by SDE	
Describe how the school's students will be tested with the same standardized tests as other Idaho public school students.	5205 (3) (d)
Comments by SDE	
Describe how the school will ensure that it shall be state accredited as provided by rule of the Idaho State Board of Education.	5205 (3) (e) 5210 (4) (b)
Comments by SDE	
Describe the governance structure of the school , including the person or entity that shall be legally accountable for the operation of the school and the process the school will follow to ensure parental involvement.	5205 (3) (f)
Comments by SDE	
Describe the qualifications to be met by individuals employed by the school. Instructional staff must be certified teachers pursuant to rule of the State board of education.	5204A (1) 5205 (3) (g) 5210 (4) (a)

<p>In the column to the left, list the page number of the petition that addresses the following elements.</p>	<p>Idaho Code Title 33 Chapter 52</p>
<p>Comments by SDE</p>	
<p>Describe the procedures the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of students and staff.</p>	<p>5205 (3) (h)</p>
<p>Comments by SDE</p>	
<p>Describe the school's plan for denial of attendance to any student who is or has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An habitual truant, ▪ Incurable, ▪ Deemed by the board of trustees to be disruptive of school discipline or instructional effectiveness, ▪ Detrimental to the health and safety of the other students, or ▪ Expelled from any other school district or state. 	<p>5205 (3) (i)</p>
<p>Comments by SDE</p>	
<p>Describe admission procedures will comply with I.C. § 33-5205(j), to include a provision for over-enrollment, and equitable selection processes for the initial year, as well as subsequent years of operation. Include enrollment capacity of the charter school.</p>	<p>5205 (3)(j)</p>
<p>Comments by SDE</p>	
<p>Describe how waiting lists will be developed and renewed annually.</p>	<p>5205 (3)(j)</p>
<p>Comments by SDE</p>	
<p>Describe the manner in which an annual audit of financial and programmatic operations will be conducted.</p>	<p>5205 (3) (k) 5206 (7) 5210 (3)</p>

<p>In the column to the left, list the page number of the petition that addresses the following elements.</p>	<p>Idaho Code Title 33 Chapter 52</p>
<p>Comments by SDE</p>	
<p>Describe the school's procedures for suspension, expulsion and re- enrollment of students, as well as procedures required by I.C. § 33-210.</p>	<p>5205 (3) (l)</p>
<p>Comments by SDE</p>	
<p>Include a provision that ensures all staff members will be enrolled in and covered by all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Employee Retirement System (PERSI) ▪ Federal Social Security ▪ Unemployment Insurance/Worker's Compensation Insurance. 	<p>5205 (3) (m)</p>
<p>Comments by SDE</p>	
<p>Describe the public school attendance alternative for students residing within the school district who choose not to attend the public charter school.</p>	<p>5205 (3) (n)</p>
<p>Comments by SDE</p>	
<p>Describe the transfer rights of any employee choosing to work in a charter school that is approved by the board of trustees of a school district, and the right of this employee to return to any non-charter school in the same district.</p>	<p>5205 (3) (o) 33-1217</p>
<p>Comments by SDE</p>	
<p>Include a provision that ensures that the staff of the public charter school shall be considered a separate unit for purposes of collective bargaining.</p>	<p>5205 (3) (p)</p>
<p>Comments by SDE</p>	

In the column to the left, list the page number of the petition that addresses the following elements.	Idaho Code Title 33 Chapter 52
Describe the manner by which special education services will be provided to students who are eligible for such services pursuant to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, to include a disciplinary procedure for such students.	5205 (3) (q)
Comments by SDE	
Describe the school's plan for working with parents who have students who are dually enrolled pursuant to Chapter 2, Title 33, Idaho Code.	5205 (3) (r)
Comments by SDE	
Describe the manner in which citizens residing in the compact and contiguous attendance area of the charter school will be made aware of enrollment opportunities.	5205 (3)(s)
Comments by SDE	
Describe the school's proposal for transportation services as required by I.C. § 33-5208(4).	5205 (3) (t) 5208 (4)
Comments by SDE	
Describe the school's plan for termination of the charter by the board of directors, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of who is responsible for dissolution of the charter school; ▪ A description of how payment to creditors will be handled; ▪ A procedure for transferring all records of students with notice to parents of how to request a transfer of student records to a specific school; and ▪ A plan for the disposal of the public charter school's assets. 	5205 (3) (u) 5206 (8)
Comments by SDE	

<p>In the column to the left, list the page number of the petition that addresses the following elements.</p>	<p>Idaho Code Title 33 Chapter 52</p>
<p>Describe the proposed operation and potential effects of the school, to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) facilities to be used by the school; b) the manner in which administrative services of the school are to be provided; and c) the potential civil liability effects upon the school and its chartering entity. 	<p>5205 (4)</p>
<p>Comments by SDE</p>	
<p>After a sufficiency review has been facilitated by the State Department of Education, the petition may be submitted to an authorized chartering entity for review.</p> <p>Upon approval by the authorized chartering entity, complete and sign a Tracking Form. Attach the Tracking Form to the approved charter and submit two copies:</p> <p>One copy to the State Board of Education:</p> <p>State Board of Education Karen Echeverria 650 West State Street, 3rd Floor P.O. Box 83720 Boise, Idaho 83720-0037</p> <p>One copy to the State Department of Education:</p> <p>State Department of Education Stephanie Clark 650 West State Street, 2nd Floor P.O. Box 83720 Boise, Idaho 83720-0027</p> <p>Forms available at http://www.sde.state.id.us/instruct/charter “Elector Petition and Tracking Forms”</p>	

TO:

FROM: Staff

DATE:

RE: **[name of charter school]**

PETITION RECEIVED:

FILE NO.

Proposed school year:

Proposed grades to begin operations:

Attendance Area:

1. Articles of Incorporation, file stamped by Secretary of States Office

☐ YES ☐ NO

A public charter school shall be organized and managed under the Idaho non-profit corporation act. Idaho Code § 33-5204(1).

Comments:

2. Adopted Bylaws

☐ YES ☐ NO

The board of directors or members of a corporation shall adopt the initial bylaws for the corporation. Idaho Code § 30-3-21(1).

Comments:

3. How did Petition come to Commission?

Virtual School

☐ YES ☐ NO

Referred by School District

☐ YES ☐ NO

Reason for referral:

Filed by Petitioner after withdrawal from school district

☐ YES ☐ NO

Date of filing with board of trustees:

Withdrawal within 30 days of submission to board of trustees?

☐ YES ☐ NO

SBOE re-directed Petition for consideration by commission?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Reason for referral:

4. State Department of Education Petition Review for Sufficiency report.

☐ YES ☐ NO

§33-1612 requirements met?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Prior to submitting a petition to an authorized chartering entity, petitioners shall submit the proposed petition to the Department, which will review it to determine

whether the petition complies with statutory requirements. IDAPA
08.02.04.200.03

Comments:

5. Written comments from an authorized representative of the school district? ☐YES ☐NO

Comments:

6. Petition signed by at least 30 qualified electors of designated service area? ☐YES ☐NO

A petition to establish a new public charter school, including a public virtual charter school, shall be signed by not fewer than thirty (30) qualified electors of the service area designated in the petition. Idaho Code § 33-5205(1)(a).

Comments:

7. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(a)? ☐YES ☐NO
- (a) Proposed educational plan?
 - (b) Identifies what it means to be an “educated person” in the 21st Century?
 - (c) Discusses how learning best occurs?
 - (d) Goals identified including how all educational thoroughness standards as defined in section 33-1612, Idaho Code shall be fulfilled?

Comments:

8. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(b) ☐YES ☐NO
- Identifies measurable student educational standards, which means the extent to which all students demonstrate they have attained the skills and knowledge specified as goals in the school’s educational program.

Comments:

9. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(c)? ☐YES ☐NO
- The method by which student progress in meeting the student educational standards is to be measured.

Comments:

10. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(d)? ☐YES ☐NO
- Provision by which students will be tested with the same standardized tests as other Idaho public school students.

Comments:

11. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(e)? ☐ YES ☐ NO
A provision which ensures that the public charter school shall be state accredited as provided by rule of the state board of education.

Comments:

12. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(f)? ☐ YES ☐ NO
The governance structure of the school including, but not limited to, the person or entity that shall be legally accountable for the operation of the public charter school? The process to be followed by the school to ensure parental involvement?

Comments:

Is Commission identified as replacing the school board of trustees?
☐ YES ☐ NO

Comments:

Pursuant to Idaho Code § 33-5204(2) the authorizing chartering entity shall have no liability for the acts, omissions, debts or other obligations of a public charter school, except as may be provided in the charter.

13. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(g)? ☐ YES ☐ NO
The qualifications to be met by individuals employed by the public charter school. Instructional staff shall be certified teachers, or may apply for a waiver or any of the limited certification options as provided by rule of the state board of education.

Comments:

14. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(h)? ☐ YES ☐ NO
The procedures that the public charter school will follow to ensure the health and safety of students and staff.

Comments:

15. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(i) ☐ YES ☐ NO
A plan for the requirements of section 33-205, Idaho Code, for the denial of school attendance to any student who is a habitual truant, or who is incorrigible, or whose conduct, in the judgment of the board of directors of the public charter school, is such as to be continuously disruptive of school discipline, or of the instructional effectiveness of the school, or

whose presence in a public charter school is detrimental to the health and safety of other pupils, or who has been expelled from another school district in this state or any other state.

Comments:

16. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(j)? ☐YES ☐NO
Admission procedures, including provision for over-enrollment. Such admission procedures shall provide that the initial admission procedures for a new public charter school, including provision for over-enrollment, will be determined by lottery or other random method, except as otherwise provided by this provision.

Comments:

17. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(k)? ☐YES ☐NO
The manner in which an annual audit of the financial operations of the public charter school is to be conducted.
The manner in which an annual audit of the programmatic operations of the public charter school is to be conducted.

Comments:

18. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(l)? ☐YES ☐NO
The disciplinary procedures that the public charter school will utilize, including the procedure by which students may be suspended, expelled, and re-enrolled.

Note: Disciplinary procedures for Special Education Students should also be included.

Comments:

19. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(m)? ☐YES ☐NO
A provision which ensures that all staff members of the public charter school will be covered by the public employee retirement system?
A provision which ensures that all staff members of the public charter school will be covered by the federal social security?
A provision which ensures that all staff members of the public charters school will be covered by unemployment insurance?
A provision which ensures that all staff members of the public charter school will be covered by worker's compensation insurance?
Funding in the budget?

Comments:

20. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(n)? ☐YES ☐NO
The public school attendance alternative for students residing within the school district who choose not to attend the public charter school.

Comments:

21. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(o)? ☐YES ☐NO
A description of the transfer rights of any employee choosing to work in a public charter school and the rights of such employees to return to any non-charter school in the school district after employment at a public charter school.

Comments:

22. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(p)? ☐YES ☐NO
A provision which ensures that the staff of the public charter school shall be considered a separate unit for purposes of collective bargaining.

Comments:

23. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(q)? ☐YES ☐NO
The manner by which special education services will be provided to students with disabilities who are eligible pursuant to the federal individuals with disabilities education act.

Comments:

24. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(r)? ☐YES ☐NO
The manner by which eligible students from the public charter school shall be allowed to participate in dual enrollment in non-charter schools within the same district as the public charter school, as provided for in section 33-203(7), Idaho Code.

Comments:

25. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(s)? ☐YES ☐NO
The process by which the citizens in the area of attendance shall be made aware of the enrollment opportunities of the public charter school.

Comments:

26. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(t)33-5208(4)? ☐YES ☐NO
For charter schools in the initial year of operation, the petition shall include a proposal for transportation services with an estimated first year cost.

Comments:

27. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(3)(u)? ☐ YES ☐ NO
A plan for termination of the charter by the board of directors, to include:
(i) Identification of who is responsible for dissolution of the charter school;
(ii) A description of how payment to creditors will be handled;
(iii) A procedure for transferring all records of students with notice to parents of how to request a transfer of student records to a specific school; and
(iv) A plan for the disposal of the public charter school's assets.

Comments:

28. Petition complies with Idaho Code § 33-5205(4)? ☐ YES ☐ NO
The petitioner shall provide information regarding the proposed operation and potential effects of the public charter school including, but not limited to, the facilities to be utilized by the public charter school, the manner in which administrative services of the public charter school are to be provided and the potential civil liability effects upon the public charter school and upon the authorized chartering entity.

Comments:

29. Petition addresses Idaho Code § 33-210(3)? ☐ YES ☐ NO
(3) The governing board of the charter school shall ensure that procedures are developed for contacting law enforcement and the student's parents, legal guardian or custodian regarding a student reasonably suspected of using or being under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance. Charter school policies formulated to meet the provisions of Section 37-2732C, Idaho Code, and this section shall be made available to each student, parent, guardian or custodian by August 31, 2002, and thereafter as provided by Section 33-5126, Idaho Code.

Comments:

30. Is school contracting for services? ☐ YES ☐ NO
Are copies of contracts included in petition? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Comments:

Services identified as being contracted:

Curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Special education	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Meals	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Legal	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

Accounting

☐YES ☐NO

Comments:

31. Idaho Code § 33-5204(4) requires public charter schools to secure insurance for liability and property loss.

Funds for a policy of insurance for liability in the budget:

☐YES ☐NO

Funds for a policy of insurance for property loss in the budget

☐YES ☐NO

Comments:

32. Idaho Code § 33-5204(2) permits a public charter school to sue or be sued, purchase, receive, hold and convey real personal property for school purposes, and borrow money for such purposes. Subsection 3 permits the board of directors of the nonprofit corporation to borrow money to finance the purchase or lease of school building facilities, equipment and furnishings.

Are there funds for Errors & Omissions insurance in the budget?* ☐YES ☐NO

*Note: E&O insurance is not required by statute but is recommended.

Comments:

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Readiness Self-Assessment

Early Considerations

Have we considered all existing avenues for education reform provided by local district and state law?

Have we discussed our mission with our district, school staff, administrators, community, and parents?

Have we established working relationships with administrators and board members in our local school district?

Have we thoroughly researched, and do we thoroughly understand, Idaho's charter school laws and rules? (See Section 5.3 for a copy of the laws and rules.)

Have we explored all avenues by which to avoid the two most common pitfalls faced by new charter schools: inadequate financial resources and inability to provide fully compliant special education services?

Governance and Finances

Have we established a structure for our charter school board and filled all positions with qualified individuals?

Have we ensured our charter school board has abundant access to financial and legal expertise as applied to public schools?

Have we adopted internal financial and accounting controls?

Have we prepared a reasonable, thorough budget that includes a list of any assumptions made regarding our revenue and expenditures?

Have we obtained quotes for property, liability, and workers compensation insurance?

Staffing

Have we defined our charter school's organizational structure, including clear lines of authority and responsibility?

Have we determined the number of teachers we will need and developed position descriptions for teachers and other staff members?

Have we defined the expertise and qualifications our staff must possess?

Have we developed a plan for staffing our special education program?

Have we planned for teacher training, especially if our proposed mission centers on innovative curriculum or teaching methods?

Curriculum and Instruction

Have we planned a curriculum consistent with our proposed mission?

Have we mapped out an education program that includes specific, measurable goals for student achievement? (See Section 3.4 of this manual for assistance with goal development.)

Have we developed a comprehensive special education program that complies with all applicable state and federal laws?

Have we defined our strategy for measuring and reporting student progress, and for administering all state-mandated assessments?

Operations

Have we developed a detailed, financially feasible plan for student transportation, including transportation for special needs students?

Have we developed a detailed, financially feasible plan for our nutrition program?

Facilities

Have we located a temporary and/or permanent site for our charter school?

Have we obtained detailed cost estimates for all possible site preparation and remodeling necessary for our charter school?

Have we considered all improvements necessary for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act?

Have we researched all relevant zoning laws and ordinances?

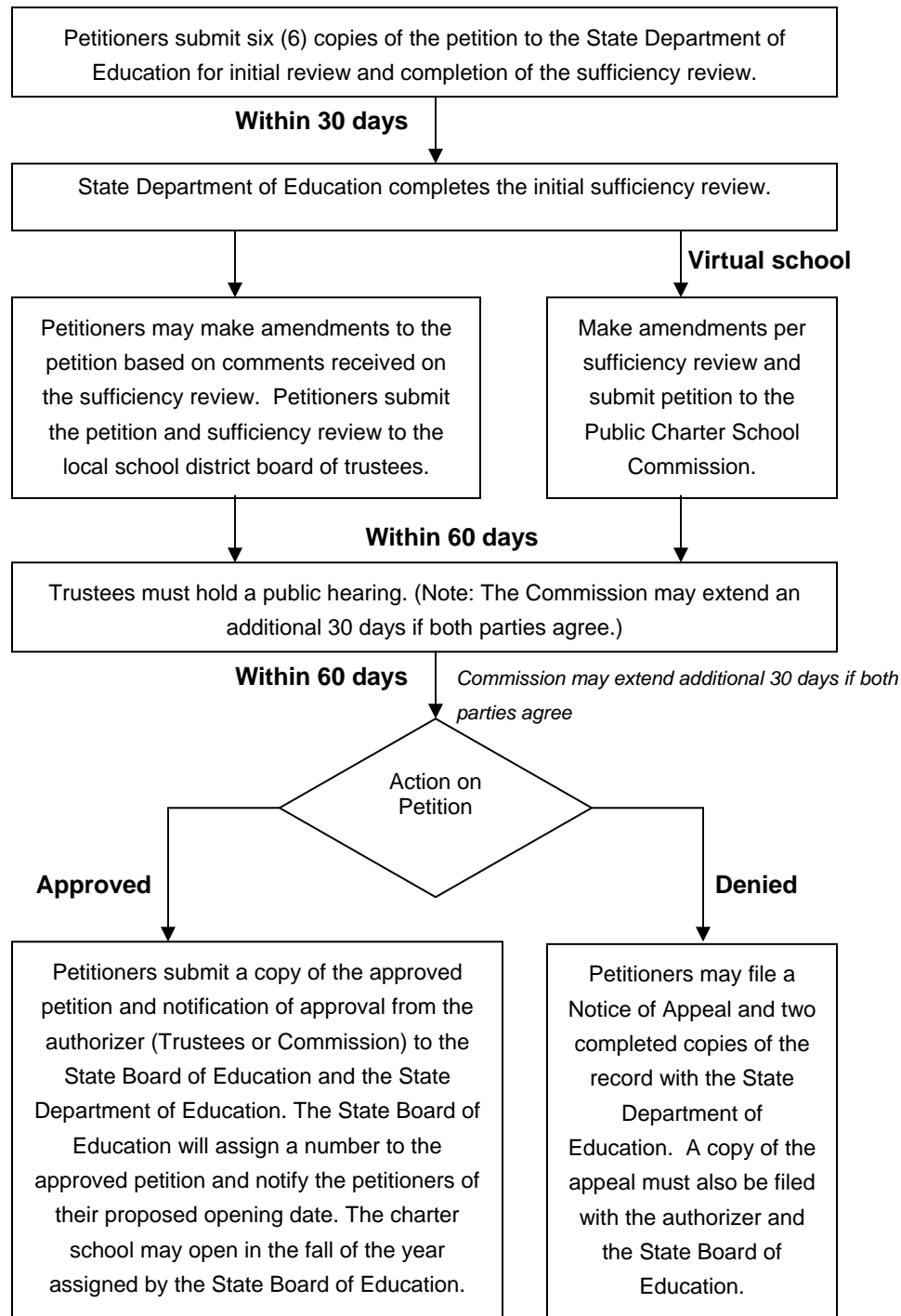
Petition Format

Have we included all the elements of a petitions required by Section 33-5205, Idaho Code in our petition? (See Appendix C for a list of all required elements)

If we are submitting our petition to the Public Charter School Commission, have we assembled our petition in the format required by IDAPA 08.03.01, Section 401? (See Appendix C for an outline of the required format)

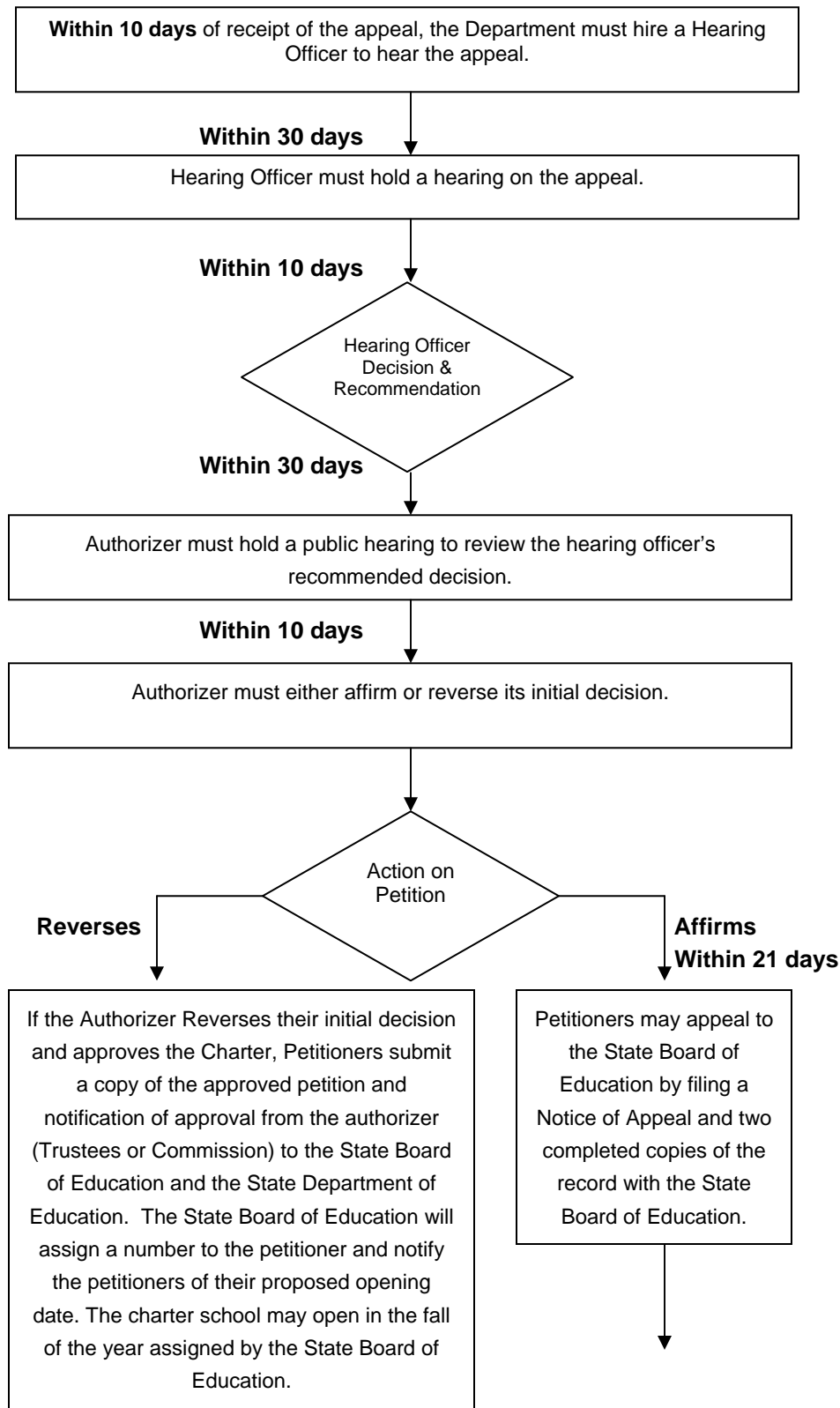
Have we reviewed our petition to ensure it is free of errors and assembled in a manner that will be easy to read and review?

Flow Chart: Approval Process for a New Charter School

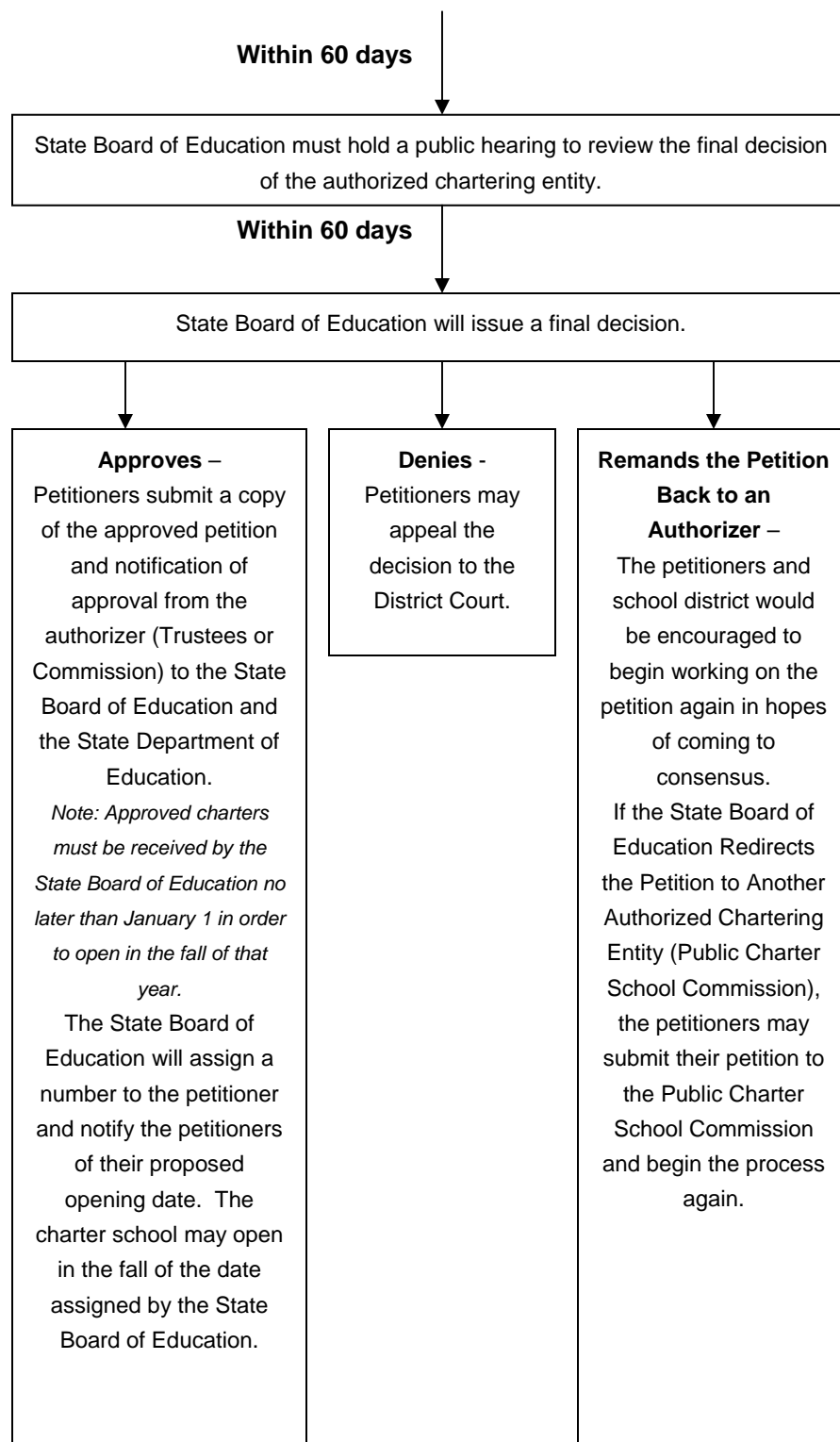


See Appeal Process next page

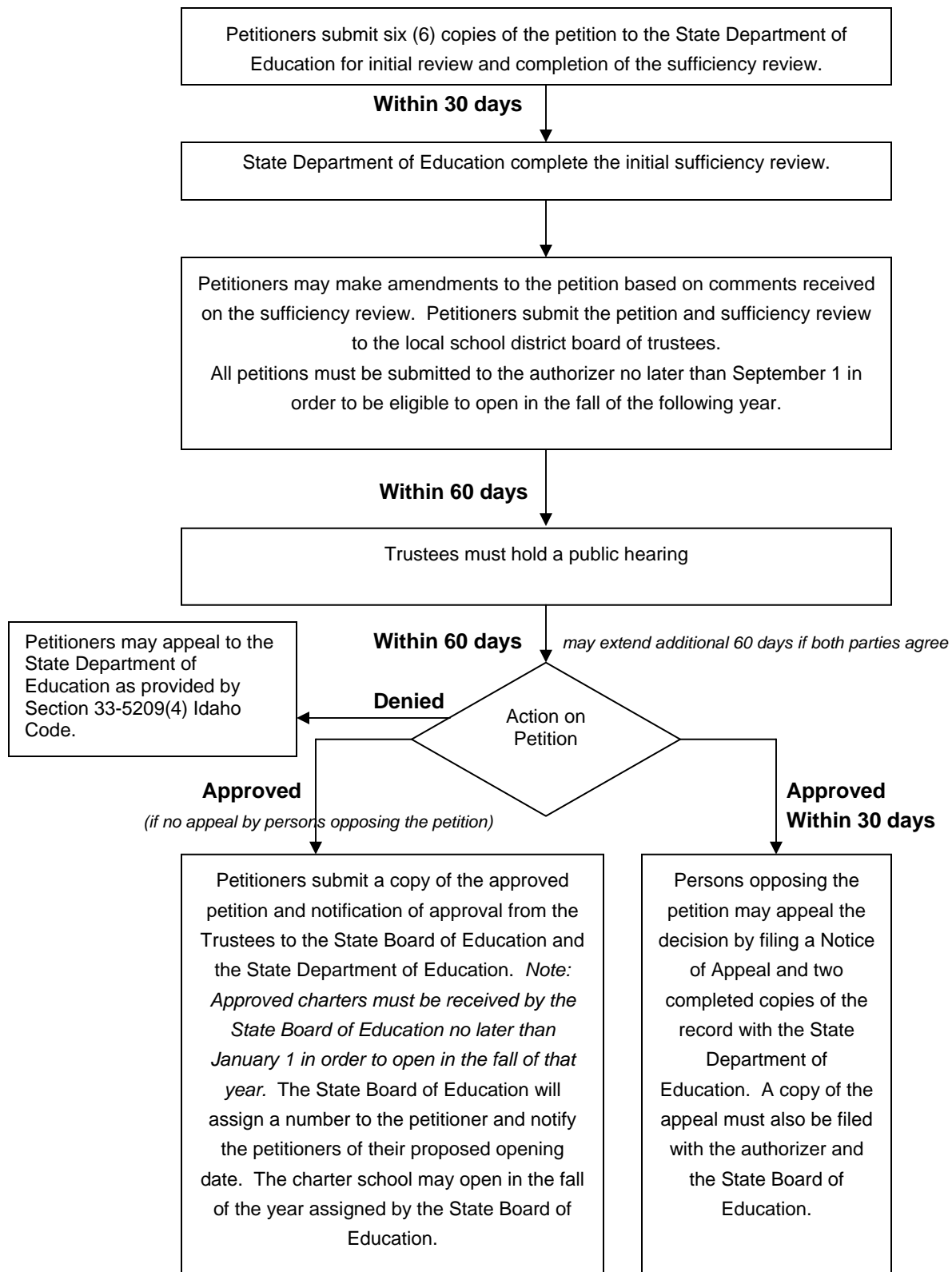
Flow Chart: Approval Process for a New Charter School (Appeal Process -1)



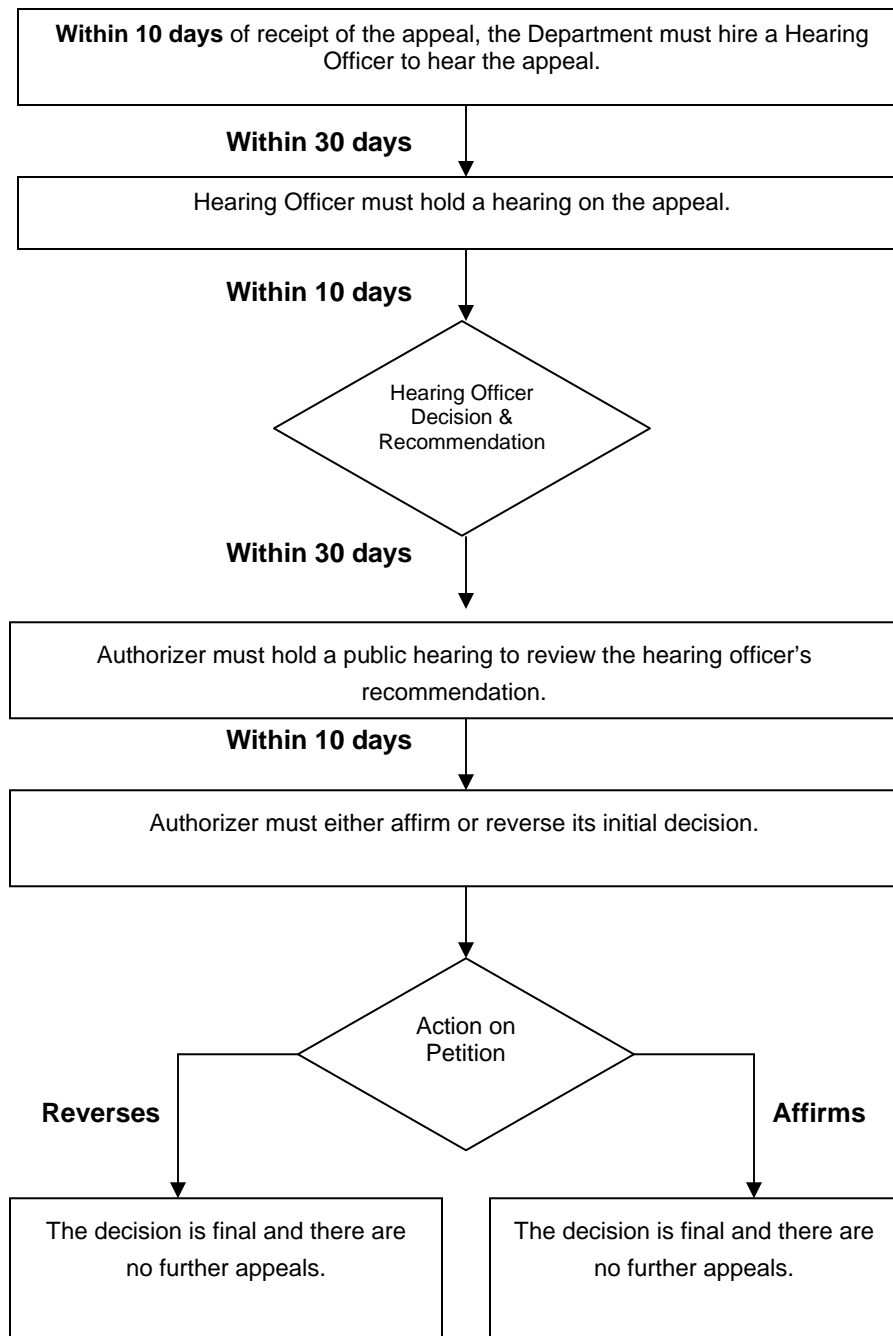
Flow Chart: Approval Process for a New Charter School (Appeal Process -2)



Flow Chart: Approval Process for a Conversion Charter School



See Appeal Process next page

**Flow Chart: Approval Process for a Conversion Charter School
(Appeal Process)**

ED482347 2003-10-00 Improving Principal Evaluation. ERIC Digest.

ERIC Development Team

www.eric.ed.gov

Table of Contents

If you're viewing this document online, you can click any of the topics below to link directly to that section.

Improving Principal Evaluation. ERIC Digest.....	1
HOW ARE PRINCIPALS TYPICALLY EVALUATED?.....	2
WHAT ARE THE SHORTCOMINGS OF CURRENT EVALUATION PRACTICES?.....	3
WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE EVALUATION?.....	3
WHAT STANDARDS SHOULD BE USED?.....	4
WHAT INSTRUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE?.....	5
RESOURCES.....	6



ERIC Identifier: ED482347

Publication Date: 2003-10-00

Author: Lashway, Larry

Source: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management Eugene OR.

Improving Principal Evaluation. ERIC Digest.

THIS DIGEST WAS CREATED BY ERIC, THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ERIC, CONTACT ACCESS ERIC 1-800-LET-ERIC

In recent years, educators and policymakers have agreed that principals are critical to school success and have repeatedly pointed out the need to aggressively recruit and select highly qualified candidates. Surprisingly, however, the evaluation of principals has attracted much less interest. Recent policy documents on school leadership have

largely ignored the topic, and the empirical research base is very thin (Ann Weaver Hart 1993).

Moreover, discussions of typical principal evaluation practices have often been highly critical (Kenneth Leithwood and colleagues 1994, Douglas Reeves in press). Reeves characterizes most leadership assessments as "infrequent, late, unhelpful, and largely a source of administrative bother."

However, growing pressure to increase student achievement, particularly the passage of No Child Left Behind, has generated new thinking about the role of principal evaluation in boosting individual and organizational performance. While still unstudied and unproven, these "best practice" reforms offer promising avenues for improvement. This Digest reviews current practices and describes some emerging issues and alternatives.

HOW ARE PRINCIPALS TYPICALLY EVALUATED?

While indepth research is scarce, several surveys have provided snapshots of principal evaluation practices. A 1998 study by NAESP (James Doud and Earl Keller) found that 76 percent of respondents reported being evaluated at least once a year, 13 percent every two or three years, and 10 percent rarely or never. The evaluations were most often carried out by central office personnel, although respondents reported a growing trend to involve parents, teachers, and principals themselves.

A sampling of seventeen California districts (David Stine 2001) found three types of evaluations in use. Checklists rated principals on a variety of behaviors or traits, ranging from time management to loyalty. Free form evaluations consisted of a narrative.

Evaluation by objectives measured principal performance against a set of predetermined goals. Evaluations often combined different formats, resulting in a wide variety of procedures. An examination of evaluation practices in North Carolina also found great diversity, concluding that "the only consistency across the state was a considered lack of consistency" (UNC Center for School Leadership Development no date).

A nationwide survey by Reeves found that principals agreed that their evaluations were generally positive (89 percent), accurate (79 percent), and consistent with job expectations (76 percent). However, fewer (around 60 percent) found the evaluation process had improved their performance or motivation, and only 47 percent said their evaluations were specific enough to know what behaviors should be changed.

While there is little evidence that either principals or their districts see evaluation as a major problem area, neither is there any indication that it plays a significant role in school improvement efforts.

WHAT ARE THE SHORTCOMINGS OF CURRENT EVALUATION PRACTICES?

Rick Ginsberg and Tom Thompson (1993) note that principal evaluation is inherently difficult because the nature of principals' work is complex, ambiguous, and highly contextual. Developing standard procedures that could reliably work in all situations is almost impossible. For example, an evaluation that used parent surveys might unfairly penalize a principal who had just made an unpopular but necessary decision. Reeves points out that in many evaluation instruments the standards are unclear or nonspecific ("demonstrates effective organizational skills"). Others are incoherent or unrealistic ("No disruptions. Yes or no."). Reeves also says that many evaluation instruments treat leadership skills as "binary" traits that either exist or do not exist, whereas in reality many skills fall along a continuum. A binary approach offers little useful feedback to a principal who is clearly proficient in a skill but still has room to improve.

An even more serious charge is that assessments are inconsequential: Little is learned and not much happens. Leithwood and colleagues concluded that many leader appraisals were conducted out of a sense of duty and had little impact on future performance. One of Reeves' respondents wrote, "Generally I have felt rather empty when no suggestions were given to me for improvement. Whenever evaluations are all positive and no suggestions for improvement, it leaves no motivation for growth and improvement." Others told of signing and returning an evaluation form that had simply appeared in their mailbox, or complained about unknowledgeable supervisors, lack of feedback, and the absence of any evaluation at all.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE EVALUATION?

Transforming principal evaluations from a perfunctory bureaucratic chore into a tool for growth requires a cyclical process rather than an annual event. Leithwood and colleagues recommend that evaluation systems include preparation (articulating procedures, policies, and purposes); data collection (using multiple data sources); and followup (providing feedback and generating professional growth plans).

Reeves emphasizes that productive evaluation processes are anchored in explicit standards that make the expectations clear to the district as well as the principal, and that also distinguish levels of proficiency. He suggests four categories: "exemplary," "proficient," "progressing," and "not meeting standards." The distinctions are important because each level implies a different kind of followup. Progressing principals may benefit from coaching on specific skills (perhaps provided by exemplary leaders whose best professional development activity may be sharing their expertise with others).

Reeves also underlines the importance of involving the principal as an active partner who helps determine evaluation criteria and takes the lead role in crafting an appropriate professional growth plan. Finally, he says that evaluation process should be both candid and challenging. For example, "proficient" principals should understand that proficient is acceptable--but is not the same as exemplary.

An evaluation process incorporating many of these elements has been developed by the Center for School Leadership Development at the University of North Carolina. The process begins with a self-assessment aligned with state and national standards for school leaders. Unlike traditional checklists, this assessment requires principals not just to rate themselves but to provide evidence to support their rating. A rubric provides concrete descriptions of performance at three different levels: "exemplary performance," "adequate performance," and "performance needs improvement."

The principal then discusses the self-assessment with his or her supervisor, identifying areas for improvement. The supervisor's role is to provide candid feedback on the principal's self-assessment and also suggest goals for the professional growth plan (which typically includes two to four goals). For each goal, the plan establishes strategies that will be pursued, evidence that will document achievement of the goal, and a timeline. The principal and supervisor have periodic conferences to monitor and discuss progress, followed by a summative conference.

WHAT STANDARDS SHOULD BE USED?

No matter how thoughtful the process, evaluations will have little impact unless the criteria are both substantive and relevant. Traditionally, principals have been evaluated on everything from organizational skills to personal character, using checklists with little more coherence than a shopping list. Increasingly, however, policymakers and practitioners have turned to comprehensive national standards, such as those from the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC).

The ISLLC standards provide a credible foundation for evaluation since they reflect a broad professional consensus on essential leadership skills. However, they have not yet generated a great deal of empirical research, so only sparse data exist on their effectiveness as instruments for change. Thomas Glass (2003) found that the criteria used by superintendents when hiring secondary principals were not completely consistent with the ISLLC standards, suggesting a possible "disconnect" between the standards and "the real world of selecting, hiring and evaluating secondary principals." While the fault here may be with superintendents' practices rather than inadequate standards, adapting the standards to the needs of practitioners may take some work.

In addition, use of broad national standards can blur the lines between input and outcomes. The ISLLC standards are process-oriented; they describe how effective principals behave. But evaluators may also be interested in results. Has parental involvement increased? Have truancy rates gone down? Are test scores up? In the eyes

of some, an effective principal is a leader who gets results, not one who shows a particular pattern of behaviors.

This outcome-oriented view has a common-sense appeal and is implicit in any evaluation system that uses goal-setting activities. However, most analysts urge caution in elevating any single measure as the standard of success. Reeves notes that while principals can control their own behaviors, they don't control everything in their environment. If a principal's progress in raising test scores is overpowered by a sudden change of school boundaries that brings in large numbers of low-performing students, that year's test scores will not provide a meaningful evaluation.

WHAT INSTRUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE?

Districts seeking to upgrade principal evaluation often devote considerable time to finding a suitable preexisting assessment. Lashway (1999) noted that there were many commercial leadership assessments available, but that few were specifically designed for school leaders and that none could directly measure job performance. However, used as part of a carefully crafted assessment and development process, these instruments were capable of offering insights into principals' leadership behaviors and skills.

By far the greatest number of assessment instruments are home-grown, typically taking the form of checklists. The limitation of the checklist approach, combined with the difficulty of developing and validating more formal instruments, has led many districts to experiment with portfolios.

Portfolios are not actually instruments but "conceptual containers" into which principals can place a wide variety of artifacts documenting their achievements. Catherine Hackney (1999) has described a typical process. After identifying a goal as the focus, the principal then gathers evidence demonstrating progress toward the desired outcome. Depending on the goal, relevant evidence might include items such as parent newsletters, meeting minutes, records of dropout rates, test scores, and handbooks.

Portfolios are highly flexible and easily tailored to the needs of individuals. However, without careful structuring, that flexibility makes it easy for the portfolio to degenerate into an even more undisciplined version of the checklist. Hackney warns against "scrapbooks" and says the value of the portfolio is the opportunity for personal reflection. "The emphasis must be on the individual's self-examination, the value of the artifacts that represent his or her work, the rationale used as defense of the product and the growth experienced as a result."

By themselves, portfolios do not align principal evaluation with the need to improve student achievement. However, when focused on instructional goals, they provide an evidence-oriented process that spurs school leaders to think more deeply about the impact they have on student performance.

RESOURCES

Doud, James L., and Edward P. Keller. *The K-8 Principal in 1998: A Ten-Year Study*. Alexandria, Virginia: National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1998.

Ginsberg, Rick, and Tom Thompson. "Dilemmas and Solutions Regarding Principal Evaluation." *Peabody Journal of Education* 68, 2 (Winter 1993): 58-74. EJ 464 838.

Glass, Thomas. *Superintendent Selection of Secondary School Principals*. Denver, Colorado: Education Commission of the States, 2003. Available online at: www.ecs.org

Hackney, Catherine Eggleston. "Three Models for Portfolio Evaluation of Principals." *School Administrator* (May 1999).

Hart, Ann Weaver. "The Social and Organizational Influence of Principals: Evaluating Principals in Context." *Peabody Journal of Education* 68, 2 (Winter 1993): 37-57. EJ 464 837.

Lashway, Larry. *Measuring Leadership: A Guide to Assessment for Development of School Executives*. Eugene, Oregon: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, 1999. 128 pages. ED 431 209.

Leithwood, Kenneth; Paul T. Begley; and J. Bradley Cousins. *Developing Expert Leadership for Future Schools*. London: Falmer Press, 1994. 331 pages. ED 394 172.

Reeves, Douglas. *Assessing Educational Leaders: Evaluating Performance for Improved Individual and Organizational Results*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press, in press.

Stine, David O. "Developing an Evaluation System to Improve Principal Performance and Accountability." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Seattle, Washington, April 2001. 28 pages. ED 452 278.

University of North Carolina Center for School Leadership Development. *Principal/Assistant Principal and Central Office Evaluation Process*. Greensboro, North Carolina: Author, no date. Online at <http://www.ga.unc.edu/pep/pp/index.html>

A Product of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, College of Education, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403-5207.

This publication was prepared with funding from the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, under contract No. ED-99-C0-0011. The ideas and opinions expressed in this Digest do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of

IES, ED, or the Clearinghouse. This Digest is in the public domain and may be freely reproduced. The text of this Digest may be viewed electronically at <http://eric.uoregon.edu> EA 032 857.

Title: Improving Principal Evaluation. ERIC Digest.

Note: Digest number 172.

Document Type: Information Analyses---ERIC Information Analysis Products (IAPs) (071); Information Analyses---ERIC Digests (Selected) in Full Text (073);

Available From: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, 5207 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-5207. Tel: 541-346-2332; Tel: 800-438-8841 (Toll Free); Fax: 541-346-2334.

Descriptors: Administrator Effectiveness, Administrator Evaluation, Administrator Responsibility, Board Administrator Relationship, Educational Administration, Elementary Secondary Education, Evaluation Criteria, Evaluation Methods, Instructional Leadership, Occupational Information, Principals, School Administration

Identifiers: ERIC Digests

Charter School Pre-Opening Checklist

This list assumes you have an approved charter petition, a board with bylaws, and that you are just getting ready to open your school. It is important to note that the circumstances of each school's opening are different. This list is not intended to be comprehensive or to take the place of independent research your team will do pertaining to your school's opening.

- ☐ Research potential sites and facility options (build new, lease existing structure, place portables on bare land, etc.)
- ☐ Contact the city or county, the Highway District, and Planning and Zoning to learn about required paving, curbing, traffic flow analysis, site zoning requirements, etc. that may be needed for your site
- ☐ If you are planning to use portables on vacant land, ensure proper notice to the utility companies (gas, water, electric, phone, sewer, cable, etc.) to ensure hookup will be possible at desired time—usually, they require a 2 month lead time
- ☐ Post fire exit maps in all occupied spaces and provide emergency training to all personnel
- ☐ Establish fire drill procedures and schedule fire drills
- ☐ Schedule facilities inspections (building, fire, and health) with city to obtain certificate of occupancy
- ☐ Arrange food service agreements and/or work with Child Nutrition Dept to set up lunch services (if requesting federal reimbursement for lunches served) If your school will not offer a federally funded free/reduced lunch program, contact the SDE to get the form to gather income data of families for purposes of determining whether your school will qualify for Title 1 funds
- ☐ Secure custodial service
- ☐ Purchase computers and networking supplies
- ☐ Order furniture and learning supplies
- ☐ Complete transportation agreement, if applicable
- ☐ Obtain immunization records for all students
- ☐ Ensure internet use policy is signed by all students and parents
- ☐ Establish liability, property, and worker's compensation insurance policies
- ☐ Conduct lottery and notify applicants of results
- ☐ Maintain waiting list
- ☐ Adjust budget and assumptions as new developments occur
- ☐ Finalize any loans, etc. required to begin operations
- ☐ File tax exemption paperwork with vendors
- ☐ File non-profit forms with state
- ☐ Establish a salary schedule
- ☐ Retain legal counsel to review all contracts
- ☐ Negotiate contracts with administrator and other personnel
- ☐ Verify that all teachers (including special education teachers) hold valid Idaho teaching certificates for the grades they teach and that these are in their personnel files
- ☐ Ensure that all paraprofessionals working in an instructional capacity meet requirements of State paraprofessional Standards and federal NCLB requirements

- ☐ Complete criminal background checks for all personnel
- ☐ Plan professional development opportunities
- ☐ Enroll all staff in PERSI
- ☐ Make arrangements to provide social security, unemployment insurance, worker's compensation insurance and health insurance for all staff
- ☐ Investigate whether it makes sense for your school to conduct background checks on volunteers who will be working with or providing transportation for students
- ☐ Provide parents with contact information for the board
- ☐ Adopt policies and procedures for the charter school-- key areas include:
 - ☐ attendance
 - ☐ school check signing
 - ☐ school credit card use
 - ☐ enrollment
 - ☐ employee leave time
 - ☐ job sharing
 - ☐ use of facility by outside groups
 - ☐ communication
 - ☐ homework
 - ☐ dress code
 - ☐ student discipline
 - ☐ internet use
 - ☐ cell phone use
 - ☐ employee and board member travel
 - ☐ background checks on volunteers
 - ☐ definition of founders
- ☐ Establish committees to assist the board—some will be standing committees and others will be temporary
- ☐ Schedule parent, teacher, and student conferences
- ☐ Publish a student handbook and ensure its review by students and parents

IDAHO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION SITE VISIT

The Idaho Public Charter School Commission ("Commission"), as the authorized chartering entity for the charter school listed below, has conducted a site visit of the charter school in furtherance of the discharge of its oversight duties under the provisions of Idaho Code § 33-5209(1) and 33-5210(2.) The site visit was conducted by Commission staff and focused primarily on a review of documentation required to be obtained or prepared by and maintained by the charter school pursuant to Idaho law. Nothing contained herein constitutes an endorsement or approval by the Commission of the charter school, its facilities, or its staff.

Primary responsibility for the operations of each individual public charters school lies with the school and the non-profit corporation which operates the school. The Commission urges the parents or guardians of students or prospective students of the charter school to visit the charter school facility and to conduct their own assessment of the charter school's facilities, staff, and other elements which will, or may, affect students of the charter school.

Name of School: Year of operation:

Evaluator(s):

Date: Time:

CONTACT INFORMATION UPDATE

Primary Contact/Title at Charter School:

Phone Number:

School Address:

SITE/FACILITIES

Is the charter school currently located at its permanent site? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no: Has a permanent site been selected? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Address of permanent site:

Is this site within the original school district and attendance area? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Anticipated move date:

DOCUMENTATION ON FILE

	S	N	D	Comments
Complete, authorized charter with all amendments 33-5210 (3)(b)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Incorporation papers with bylaws (including renewals) 33-5204(1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Proof of accreditation 33-5205(4)(e)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Certificate of Occupancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Signed transportation agreement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Signed food service agreement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Facilities inspections including fire and health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Immunization records for all students 33-4801	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Technology / internet use policy signed by each student and parent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Appropriate documentation and reports for all federal programs operated by the	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

school

Annual report to Commission including
audit of fiscal and programmatic
operations, student progress, and
accreditation report

☐ ☐ ☐

33-5206(7)

INSURANCE

General Liability 33-5205(4)

☐ ☐ ☐

Property 33-5205(4)

☐ ☐ ☐

Workers Compensation 33-5205(3)(m)

☐ ☐ ☐

S – Satisfactory N – Needs Improvement D – Deficient

ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Current Enrollment: out of total possible enrollment

Percentage of students who are children of founders:

Number on waiting list:

Date of next lottery:

Will any grades be added for the next school year? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, which grade(s) will be added?

	S	N	D	Comments
Documentation of lottery method and results on file 33-5205(4)(j)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Documentation of effort to inform public of enrollment opportunities on file 33-5205 (3)(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Attendance records maintained daily by authorized persons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Procedure is in place for addressing excessive absences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

S – Satisfactory N – Needs Improvement D – Deficient

FINANCE

	S	N	D	Comments
Budget has been adopted for the current year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
School meets accepted accounting standards of fiscal management 33-5209(2)(c)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Monthly financial report is current and accurate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
School's quarterly dashboard reports have been submitted to Commission in a timely manner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
School has scheduled its annual, independent financial audit 33-5205(3)(k)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If school will be moving to a permanent site, budget shows appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

revisions

If school will be adding new grades
next year, budget shows appropriate ☐ ☐ ☐

revisions

Budget concerns remaining at time
of charter authorization / prior ☐ ☐ ☐
evaluation have been resolved*

S – Satisfactory N – Needs Improvement D – Deficient

*Budget Concerns at Time of Charter Authorization / Prior Evaluation

Concern(s)

Resolution(s)

PERSONNEL PROCEDURES

Number of administrators:

Number of teachers:

Number of other employees:

	S	N	D	Comments
All teachers hold valid Idaho teaching certificates appropriate to the grade levels they teach & these certificates are kept on file 33-5205(4)(g) & 33-5206(4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Staff contracts are written in form approved by the state superintendent of public instruction 33-5206(4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Criminal background checks have been completed for all employees 33-5210(44)(d)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Teacher training and other employee development activities are documented	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Special education personnel are appropriately certified	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
All staff are covered by public employee retirement system, federal social security, unemployment insurance, worker's compensation 33-5205(3)(m)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

S – Satisfactory N – Needs Improvement D – Deficient

GOVERNANCE

Have changes been made to the school board since authorization? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, specify changes:

Updated list of board members and contact information obtained? ☐ Yes ☐ No

	S	N	D	Comments
Governing board meeting schedule is posted for the public	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Attendance logs and minutes are available per open meeting laws	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Parents have been provided with contact information for school board ☐ ☐ ☐
 S – Satisfactory N – Needs Improvement D – Deficient

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

How is the charter school meeting its mission and purpose statement as described in the authorized charter?

Have curriculum changes been made since charter authorization? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, specify changes:

Does the school use a specific, commercially available curriculum? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, specify curriculum used:

If no, complete the following:

Who designed the school's curriculum?

Describe the curriculum:

How have teachers been trained to use the curriculum?

Are students meeting the measurable Student Educational Standards goals described in the charter? ☐ Yes ☐ No 33-5205(4)(b-c)

If yes, describe evidence provided:

If no, what measures is the school taking to improve student achievement?

Have most recent ISAT scores been submitted to Commission staff? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do ISAT scores show adequate yearly progress? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, what measures is the school taking to improve student growth?

Percentage of students in special education:

Comparable to district percentage? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, explain reasons for discrepancy:

What resources are available to LEP students?

What resources are available to GAT students?

	S	N	D	Comments
CURRICULUM				
Teachers document lesson plans as they relate to state and federal standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Adequate classroom materials, technology, and textbooks are available to all students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Students performing below grade level are identified and provided with remedial instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Basic values of honesty, self-discipline, unselfishness, respect for authority and the central importance of work are emphasized 33-1612	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Elementary and middle school instruction includes, at appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

grade levels, the following:

Language Arts

Reading ☐

Writing ☐

English ☐

Literature ☐

Technological Applications ☐

Spelling ☐

Speech ☐

Listening ☐

Mathematics

Addition ☐

Subtraction ☐

Multiplication ☐

Division ☐

Percentages ☐

Mathematical Reasoning ☐

Probability ☐

Science

Applied Sciences ☐

Earth and Space Sciences ☐

Physical Sciences ☐

Life Sciences ☐

Social Studies

History ☐

Government ☐

Geography ☐

Economics ☐

Current World Affairs ☐

Citizenship ☐

Sociology ☐

Other

Fine Arts (art and music) ☐

Health (wellness) ☐

Physical Education (fitness) ☐

Middle School Only

Family and Consumer Science ☐

Vocational-Technical Education
☐ Advisory Period ☐

08.02.03.103 & 08.02.03.104

By the end of grade 8, students have developed parent-approved student learning plans for high school and post-high school options ☐ ☐ ☐

Student Learning Plans are reviewed annually throughout high school 08.02.03.104 ☐ ☐ ☐

High school students earn a minimum of 42 semester credits prior to graduation including: ☐ ☐ ☐

Secondary Language Arts and Communication (9 credits)

English (8 cr.) ☐

Speech or debate (1 cr.) ☐

Mathematics and Science (8 credits)

Mathematics (4 cr.) ☐

Science (4 cr., 2 lab) ☐

Social Studies (5 cr.)

Government 2 cr.) ☐

U.S. History (2 cr.) ☐

Economics (1 cr.) ☐

Humanities (2 cr.) ☐

May be fulfilled by interdisciplinary humanities, visual/performing arts, foreign language, or other if approved the SDE 08.02.03.105-107

ASSESSMENT

Students have participated in the same standardized tests as other Idaho public school students (ISAT, Direct Writing and Direct Math Assessments, Idaho Reading Indicator, District End of Course Indicator) 33-5205(4)(d)

☐ ☐ ☐

Student evaluation process is in place for periodic assessment in reading, writing, math, and science as indicated in the charter

☐ ☐ ☐

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Procedures are in place for identification and placement of special education students

☐ ☐ ☐

Special education students' IEPs are current

☐ ☐ ☐

Special education and related services are being delivered as indicated in students' IEPs

☐ ☐ ☐

S – Satisfactory N – Needs Improvement D – Deficient

COMMUNITY AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

	S	N	D	Comments
Procedures are in place for reporting student progress to parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Parent/teacher/student meetings are scheduled regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Student handbook published and procedure established to ensure its annual review by students and parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
School policies are available (online and/or hard copy at school) for review by parents and the public	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
School has sought community partnership and involvement (specify in comments)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

S – Satisfactory N – Needs Improvement D – Deficient

QUESTIONS FROM THE COMMISSION:

OTHER

Is the school interested in making changes to its charter? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, specify changes under consideration:

Additional Comments:

Date of last verbal report to Commission:

Next report date:

Prospective Board Member Request for Information

General

- 1.** Please provide your educational and employment history. A resume is preferred, but not required.
- 2.** Please indicate whether you will be at least eighteen years old by January 1 of the year in which the proposed charter school would open.
- 3.** Please indicate how you became aware of the proposed charter school and the opportunity to serve as a member of its board if it is chartered, including who invited you, if applicable, to sit on the Board.
- 4.** Please explain why you wish to serve on the Board
- 5.** Please indicate if you have previously served on a board of a school district or a not-for-profit corporation (including the board of a non-public school) and describe any relevant experience.
- 6.** Please describe your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member.
- 7.** Please indicate specifically the knowledge and experience that you would bring to the board.
- 8.** Please provide a forecast of where you see the school in one year and then again in four years.
- 9.** How would you handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the school's board are involved in self-dealing (working for their own benefit, or the benefit of their friends and family)?

Conflict of Interest

- 10.** If you, your spouse or other family members knew any of the other prospective board members prior to being invited to sit on the board, please so indicate and describe the relationship with each such prospective board member.
- 11.** If you, your spouse or other immediate family members know anyone that plans to do business with the school, please so indicate and describe the relationship and the nature of the potential business.
- 12.** If the school proposes to partner with an educational service provider (a management company), please indicate if you, your spouse or other immediate family members know any employees, owner, or agents of

that provider. If your answer is yes, please indicate the individuals you know and the nature of the relationship.

- 13.** If the school proposed to enter into a contract with an education service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other immediate family member have a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the education service provider.
- 14.** Please indicate if you, your spouse or other relative (by marriage or blood) anticipate conducting any business with the educational service provider, the school or both. If so, please describe the potential relationship.
- 15.** Please indicate if you foresee any potential ethical or legal conflicts of interest should you serve on the school's board. If so, describe such potential conflicts.

School Vision

- 16.** Please describe your understanding of the school's mission and/or philosophy.
- 17.** Please indicate your level of familiarity with the educational program that the school proposes to utilize.
- 18.** Please describe what you believe to be the key characteristics of a successful school. What specific steps do you think the board of the school will need to take to ensure that this school is successful?

CHARTER SCHOOL**ADMINISTRATORS CONTRACT**

THIS CONTRACT, made this 16th day of February year of 2005, by and between _____ CHARTER SCHOOL ("Charter School"), Eagle, Idaho, and _____ ("the Administrator").

WITNESSETH:

That the Charter School hereby employs said Administrator to perform the duties of PRINCIPAL so designated by the Charter School and to perform such other duties as specified by the Charter School at any time during the term hereof, provided that the Administrator is properly certified and endorsed to perform said duties for a period of two years, with an option for a third year, beginning in the month and day of July 1, year of 2005, through the month and day of June 30, year of 2007. The base salary for the first 12 months will be \$70,000 plus a personal performance pool of up to 7% of the base salary (see Exhibit A). The base salary will increase 2% to \$71,400 the second 12 months. Said base salary shall be paid in equal monthly installments on the 1st day of each month beginning in August, year of 2005, to July, year of 2007, inclusive. The personal performance shall be paid on June 30th of each year. The time commitment to this job includes all 12 months of the year, with expectations higher when school is in session.

In consideration of the promises and agreement of the Charter School hereinbefore recited, the Administrator agrees to assume the duties above recited at _____ CHARTER SCHOOL, Boise, Idaho on July 1, in the year 2005, and to faithfully perform and discharge the same to the best of his ability and as directed by the Charter School Board of Directors ("the Board" and to comply with the applicable laws of the State of Idaho, the duly adopted rules of the State Board of Education, and such regulations, directives and policies as the Charter School Board of Directors may legally prescribe which are, by reference, incorporated in and made a part of this agreement the same as if set forth herein.

Failure to perform said duties as outlined about is considered non-performance. This could result in any or all of the following, reprimand, probation, and/or dismissal.

The Board shall review this Contract during the 2006-2007 year of performance hereunder to consider employing the Administrator beyond the last year designated in this contract. If the Board elects to employ the Administrator beyond the last year designated in this Contract, it shall offer the Administrator a continuation of the current Contract, which shall be at a salary not less than the salary designated in this Contract, unless one of the parties notifies the other party prior to May 15, of the last year of this contract of the intent to discontinue employment.

It is hereby mutually stipulated and agreed by and between the parties hereto that nothing herein contained shall operate or be construed as a waiver of any of the rights, powers, privileges, or duties of either party hereto, by and under the laws of the State of Idaho, otherwise than is herein expressly stated.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the Board has caused this Contract to be executed in its name by its proper officials and the Administrator has executed the same all on the date first above written.

_____, CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

_____, Administrator Date_____

CHARTER SCHOOLS



CREATING EFFECTIVE GOVERNING BOARDS

Produced under a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Creating an Effective Charter School Governing Board was created by *Frank Martinelli*, president of the Center for Public Skills Training in Milwaukee. He has provided training and management assistance to nonprofit organizations and public agencies since 1976. Frank has a special interest in charter school start-ups by non-profit youth and family serving organizations and has assisted in the planning of three such charter schools in Milwaukee.

Areas of expertise include volunteer management, strategic planning facilitation, designing and leading high priority meetings and conferences, board and staff retreats, and forging community collaborations and alliances. Frank is also a member of the faculty of The Learning Institute, a national joint venture of the Society for Nonprofit Organizations, United Way of America, and the University of Wisconsin-Extension designed to deliver training through a range of emerging technologies.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

CREATING EFFECTIVE GOVERNING BOARDS

TWELVE CHALLENGES



1. BUILDING THE FOUNDATION



2. IDENTIFYING AND RECRUITING BOARD MEMBERS



3. ORIENTING AND TRAINING BOARD MEMBERS



4. MAKING EFFECTIVE DECISIONS



5. STRATEGIC PLANNING AND THINKING



6. CARRYING OUT LEGAL AND FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES



7. DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE BOARD-STAFF RELATIONS



8. DEVELOPING FRUITFUL BOARD-COMMUNITY/PARENT RELATIONS



9. ENCOURAGING BOARD MEMBER MOTIVATION & ACCOUNTABILITY



10. CREATING EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES



11. FOSTERING FUND-RAISING



12. DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT



CHARTER SCHOOLS

CREATING EFFECTIVE GOVERNING BOARDS

INTRODUCTION

The ability of a charter school to carry out its mission depends heavily upon the strength of its governing board. An effective board provides strategic direction for the school, chooses and nurtures strong school leaders, and ensures the school's financial and legal soundness. For a charter school to succeed, it must form a board that is committed to the school's mission, possesses substantial leadership skills and expertise, sets policy that guides the school's work, and evaluates both the school and itself with an eye toward continuous improvement.

Assembling and mobilizing a group of individuals to carry out these responsibilities is a daunting task, requiring commitment, careful planning, and wisdom. In response -- by building on the best of the nonprofit, district, charter and private school governance training and resources -- the Charter Friends National Network offers *Creating an Effective Charter School Governing Board*, written by Frank Martinelli, with the Center for Public Skills Training in Milwaukee,

Wisconsin. Created with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the guidebook is designed to help prepare and sustain board members to lead an autonomous public school.

The much more extensive guidebook, available online at

www.uscharterschools.org/gb/governance/, details governance principles and concepts, models of best practice, and essential resources. This overview of the larger guidebook summarizes twelve critical challenges that charter school developers must meet to build and maintain an effective charter school board. Following each challenge is a set of issues that boards may encounter along the way, and a discussion of possible strategies. At the conclusion of the discussion of each challenge is a list of some of the numerous resources available in the larger online guidebook and elsewhere.



CHALLENGE 1: BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

An effective governance model requires that everyone is clear and in agreement about their roles and responsibilities. With that in mind, the board developer's initial challenge is to clearly define the board's roles, responsibilities and philosophy of governance.



ISSUES

Charter schools have been plagued by a variety of fundamental governance problems, including: ¹

- meddlesome boards who become entangled with issues normally entrusted to administrators or teachers
- unstable leadership by founders who prove better at articulating a vision than at actually running a school
- internal dissension, often exacerbated by insufficiently clear division of roles and responsibilities
- lack of professional competence in financial, managerial, or administrative areas,
- difficulty in balancing input from various stakeholder groups, and
- exhausting volunteers (including boardmembers) by expecting too much of them.



STRATEGIES

Many of these problems arise when there is a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities between the board and staff of the charter school. However, all of these problems are preventable. Several steps can be initiated early in the board-building process to institute effective board practices.

Be clear and in agreement about roles and responsibilities.

An effective governance model requires clear and detailed descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of the board, its committees, its officers, and staff. The National Center For Nonprofit Boards has developed the following list of the basic roles and responsibilities of a non-profit board of directors which can serve as a guide for charter school governing boards as well: ²



¹ Grignano, Chenzie, **Guidance for Charter School Operators**, Charter Schools Project, Duquesne University, 1999.

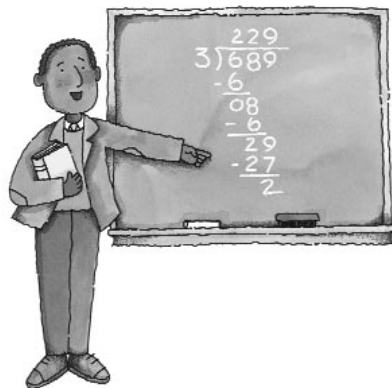
² Ingram, Richard T., **Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards**, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1996.

- determine the charter school's mission and purpose
- select the charter school administrator
- support the charter school administrator and review his or her performance
- ensure effective organizational planning
- ensure adequate resources
- manage resources effectively
- determine and monitor the charter school's programs and services
- enhance the charter school's public image, and
- assess its own performance.

Create a strategic plan for growth in school and board development.

Charter school developers will need to plan for the orderly transition from the emerging or planning stage — when volunteer founders do most of the work — to the growth or operational stage of development — when founders take on new roles as staff, teachers and/or board members. According to the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) Charter Starters Leadership Training Academy, the following are some questions that are important to consider: ³

- What is the relationship between founders, the board, and day-to-day operators?
- Do all the founders want to remain involved in the school and if so, do they want to serve on the governing board, as non-board school volunteers, or as members of the paid staff?
- How will new board members be recruited as some or all founders leave the governing board in the future?
- What skills and areas of expertise are needed in different stages of development?
- Will the board be able to maintain the workload of a committee of the whole or will the board need to establish standing committees as the school grows?
- How will the board transition from operational/managerial tasks to governance, policy and strategic planning?



³ Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), **Charter Starters Leadership Training Academy Workbook**, 1999. **Module 4: Management and Governance**, 1999. Visit www.nwrel.org.



Learn More about Building the Foundation

Full Resource Guide

www.uscharterschools.org/gb/governance/

Tools Available in Online Resource Guide

Sample Articles Of Incorporation For Charter Schools That Are Separately Incorporated Nonprofit Organizations

Bylaws Checklist

Sample Bylaws

Charter School Board Governance Framework Chart

The Annual Board Development Sequence Chart

Additional Resources for Defining Board Roles, Responsibilities, and Governance Philosophy

Carver, John, **Boards that Make a Difference: A New Design for Leadership in Nonprofit and Public Organizations**. Jossey-Bass, 1990.

Carver, John, **Reinventing your Board. A Step-by-Step Guide to Implementing Policy Governance**. Jossey-Bass, 1997.

Chait, Richard, **How to Help Your Board Govern More and Manage Less**. National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1994.

Gardner, Laurie and Premack, Eric, **Charter School Governance Toolkit, First Edition, Charter Schools Development Center**, 1999. [Section 1 includes a selection of sample foundation documents (bylaws and articles of incorporation that can be adapted to meet your charter school's specific needs).]

Ingram, Richard T., **Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards**, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1996.

Mathiasen, Karl, **Board Passages: Three Key Stages in a Nonprofit Board's Life-cycle**, National Center for Nonprofit Boards. (This publication is probably the only one that focuses in detail on how to understand, anticipate and manage Founder's Syndrome.)

Zeitlin, Kim Arthur, and Dorn, Susan E., **The Nonprofit Board's Guide to Bylaws: Creating a Framework for Effective Governance**, National Center for Nonprofit Boards. (This publication contains advice on the pros and cons of common bylaw language, a checklist of elements bylaws should contain as well as sample language. A diskette is available with 11 complete sample bylaws that can be easily adapted to meet your needs.)



CHALLENGE 2:

IDENTIFYING AND RECRUITING BOARD MEMBERS

The next challenge that faces charter school board developers is determining how to recruit board members who are committed to the school and possess the skills, knowledge and other attributes needed in order for the board to effectively carry out its responsibilities.



ISSUES

Most board performance problems can be traced to the casual or haphazard way that some charter schools go about recruiting, selecting and orienting board members. Common problems include:

- a temporary nominating committee that often relies on whoever is available from a relatively closed "circle of friends and supporters" already known to the organization or the committee members, and
- a narrow and ad hoc recruitment process which can result in a quickly assembled board that lacks diversity and balance in the critical areas of finance, management, and administration.



STRATEGIES

Having an effective board recruitment and nominations process in place is the first, and by far the most important, board development practice. While it is time-consuming, instituting a recruitment and nominations process from the start, rather than approaching the task as an ad hoc activity, will result in a more accurate assessment of the charter

school's board leadership needs, ensure involvement from the best qualified individuals to fill those board leadership needs, and create a solid orientation process for new board members.

The development of an effective recruitment and nominations process could take the following course:

1. Establish a board development committee.
2. Prepare for active board member recruitment.
3. Develop a profile of the current charter school board.
4. Determine strategies to build board diversity.
5. Develop an initial list of prospective board members.
6. Contact top recruiting prospects.
7. Schedule and conduct orientation sessions with prospective board members.
8. Select new members to the board.





Learn More about Identifying and Recruiting Board Members

Full Resource Guide

www.uscharterschools.org/gb/governance/

Tools Available in Online Resource Guide

Invitation Letter And Packet

Position Descriptions For Individual Board Members

Prospective Board Member Application Form

Board Profile Worksheets

Additional Resources for Board Recruitment

Board Member Orientation. Published by Aspen Publishers, Inc. (In spite of the title, this publication includes a number of sample forms and documents useful in every step of the board recruitment process. As an added feature, all of the forms and worksheets in the manual are available on a diskette.)

Building Board Diversity, by Jennifer M. Rutledge. Published by the National Center for Nonprofit Boards. (This publication provides a comprehensive approach to developing and implementing a plan to build a board that is more diverse and inclusive. One of the few resources of its kind, it includes a number of worksheets.)



ISSUES

Because charter school board members are likely to come to their positions with very different perspectives on their roles and responsibilities, as well as the mission, vision, major goals, and strategies of the charter school, the lack of an effective orientation and training program can cause several problems, including:

- internal dissension and division of the board into various factions
- inability of new board members to fully function in their roles
- lack of productivity, and
- a general sense of personal dissatisfaction.



STRATEGIES

Develop a long-term orientation strategy.

There must be a commitment to developing a well-informed board, one with the knowledge needed to lead an effective charter school. Providing new board members with the information they need to perform effectively is the next critical step in developing strong leadership for the charter school.

Consider developing a long-term orientation strategy that is thorough, provided in a timely manner, and follows the board members from the recruitment stage, through the first three months, and beyond.

CHALLENGE 3:

ORIENTING AND TRAINING BOARD MEMBERS

A central challenge of governance is to help charter school board members acquire the skills and knowledge they need to be effective leaders and decision-makers.

Assess the orientation and training needs of board members.

In order to learn what new board members really need from the orientation and training program, past and current board members can be asked the following question: "What do you know now that you wish you had known when you first joined the board?" Their responses can be used to develop the core curriculum.

Create a board member manual.

The written board member manual is an indispensable tool in the orientation and training of board members — both current and new. The board manual is never a substitute for face-to-face interaction, but without it, effective orientation and training is made much more difficult. The board manual will be a reference used in new board member orientation, as well as ongoing board training and education, and it will help to ensure efficient organization and access to these materials.

Develop a variety of orientation/training strategies.

New board member orientation and ongoing board education training programs are obvious ways to educate your board members. However, you may want to consider incorporating training into each board meeting, providing mini-seminars on special interest topics, helping set up study groups, and providing access to publications and conferences.





Learn More about Orienting and Training Board Members

Full Resource Guide

www.uscharterschools.org/gb/governance/

Tools Available in Online Resource Guide

Sample Board of Directors Handbook Table of Contents

Sample Board Member Orientation Outline

Parliamentary Procedure Overview

Additional Resources for Board Orientation and Training

Board Member Orientation. Published by Aspen Publishers, Inc. (This publication includes a number of sample forms and documents useful in every step of the board orientation process. As an added feature, all of the forms and worksheets in the manual are available on a Macintosh and IBM compatible diskette.)

How Do We Keep Board Members Informed? National Center for Nonprofit Boards. Go to: www.ncnb.org. Click on "Frequently Asked Questions".



CHALLENGE 4:

MAKING EFFECTIVE DECISIONS

As the board of an independent public school (in many cases also a separately incorporated nonprofit organization) the charter school board is the source of all authority – much of it delegated to others – and has the ultimate responsibility as a result. Therefore it is critical to the success of the charter school that the board makes effective decisions.



ISSUES

A board that meets monthly for two hours has only 24 hours a year in which to make a number of major decisions and still have time to address unforeseen issues and challenges. Without a framework for making decisions, problems can often arise, including:

- confusion and lack of agreement about who decides what
- lack of ownership of tasks, and
- time-consuming duplication of efforts.



STRATEGIES

There are several tools that can be used to increase the effectiveness of board decision-making.

Create a board policy manual.

Staff members need to be clear about what they are supposed to implement and board members should not have to reinvent similar policies over and over again. Therefore, board policies should be kept organized and accessible. For this reason, it is advisable to have a written board policy manual in which all the policies the board adopts are maintained.

Develop a decision-making flowchart.

It will be very helpful to have a written description of the decision-making process the board intends to use. This approach reflects clarity about who is responsible for what. The flowchart offers visual details about where issues may originate from, where issues can be delegated to, how issues are to be dealt with, and how actions and recommendations are to be made.

Use a decision matrix.

The purpose of a decision matrix is to define the authority and decision-making roles and responsibilities of the board clearly in relation to the authority and decision-making roles and responsibilities of other groups and constituencies within the charter school. The matrix identifies decisions needing to be made in a number of broad categories such as: school goals, curriculum and instruction, personnel, staff development, communication, budget, assessment and evaluation, record-keeping, and school culture. For each of these decision categories, the matrix then specifies: the decision to be made; who should decide; who should recommend; who should be solicited for input; who should be informed; and which decision-making process should be followed.



Use an executive committee to help facilitate decision-making.

Another critical element in effective decision-making is a functioning executive committee. The executive committee facilitates effective decision-making by the full board by playing the following three critical roles: planning the agenda of board meetings, making decisions on behalf of the full board, and serving as a communication link with other members of the board.

Utilize consent agendas.

To expedite business at a charter school board meeting, the board can approve the use of a consent agenda that includes those items considered to be routine in nature. Full information about these items should be provided to the board in advance in the board packet and any questions or concerns can be directed to the makers of the motions and answered prior to the meeting. This process allows thorough examination of routine items without using up precious board meeting time. Any item that appears on the consent agenda may be removed from the consent agenda by a member of the board. The remaining items will be voted on by a single motion.

Create an annual calendar of major board decisions.

Another tool that can help charter school boards maintain their focus on governance policy and critical emerging issues is an annual calendar of major decisions. Major decisions (such as setting the annual budget, setting goals, and selection of new board members) can be scheduled on an annual basis, allowing other decisions and work to be scheduled in a timely manner. This can also facilitate decision-making by the board's committees and help the charter school administrator organize his or her priorities.

Display an organizational dashboard.

Another tool that can be used to increase the effectiveness of board decision-making is the "organizational dashboard."⁴ The dashboard displays up-to-date information about key success factors of the charter school – the most essential areas of performance. Once the critical success factors have been identified, the board and the charter school administrator (and other key staff) can then propose and consider strategic performance indicators – the qualitative and quantitative data that most accurately measure and convey the critical areas of performance. As the "dashboard" metaphor implies, the board

can regularly refer to the organizational dashboard for information about how well the school is doing relative to its critical success factors. In this way, corrective action can be taken before – not during or after – a crisis erupts.

Provide board members with a board book and other timely communications.

An effective way to provide board members with needed information in a timely manner is through a written "board book" or board member packet that goes out before board meetings. The book may include outlines of significant developments, an updated copy of the organizational dashboard, an agenda, minutes from other meetings, executive summaries of accompanying documents, etc. In addition, consider using your website and email for distributing information between board meetings.

⁴ Chait, Richard, Holland, Thomas, and Taylor, Barbara, *Improving the Performance of Governing Boards*, Oryz Press, 1996.





Learn More about Making Effective Decisions

Full Resource Guide

www.uscharterschools.org/gb/governance/

Tools Available in Online Resource Guide

Flow Chart: How Board Decisions Are Made
Executive Committee/Board Meeting Planning Form
Questions Before Making Sound Decisions
Sample Board Meeting Agenda
Decision-making Matrix
Board Communication Plan
Policy Development Steps
Board Meeting Evaluation Form
Sample Board Operations Calendar

Additional Resources for Board Decision-making and Meetings

Sample Board Policies in Critical Areas: *conflict of interest, enrollment, etc.*
See the following websites:

- Independent Schools Association of the Central States at www.isacs.org; click on "Monographs", then scroll down and click on "Board of Trustees" and "Business Operations" for sample policies.
- Also see Minnesota Council of Nonprofits management resources at <http://www.mncn.org/manage.htm#2>.
- Also see the Free Management Library of The Management Assistance Program for Nonprofits (MAP) at <http://www.mapnp.org/library/boards/boards.htm#anchor1322914>.

Fletcher, Kathleen, The Policy Sampler, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 2000. Contains a diskette with over 70 policies covering critical areas such as conflict of interest, grievances, sexual harassment, nepotism, confidentiality and more. Comes with printed user guide.

Gardner, Laurie, Charter School Governance Toolkit, First Edition, Charter Schools Development Center, 1999. (Section 2 includes a good selection of sample policies that can be adapted to meet your charter school's specific needs.)

Smoley, Eugene, Effective School Boards, Jossey-Bass, 1999.



ISSUES

There are a number of factors that prevent boards from thinking and planning strategically. The following factors can serve as barriers to visionary charter school board leadership:

- shortage of time
- avoidance of risk-taking
- micro-management
- lack of knowledge in an increasingly complex world, and
- lack of clarity about board-staff roles and responsibilities.



STRATEGIES

There are several strategies that you can employ to help your board adopt a visionary leadership style.

Focus on the ultimate ends of the organization.

Board members should concentrate on the charter school's ultimate ends rather than the day-to-day means.⁵ Board members should focus on the mission, vision, goals and strategies contained in the strategic plan, leaving the daily management to the staff and charter school administrator.

Create a long-range plan for the development of future board leadership.

In contrast to the typical short-term recruitment process that focuses narrowly on filling anticipated charter school board vacancies for the current year only, boards need a long-range plan for developing future leadership. Such a long-term plan centers on the following questions: Who will be serving on and leading the board over the next three years? What is our plan to scout board leadership talent for the future?

CHALLENGE 5

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND THINKING

The charter school board has a critical role to play in strategic planning. Charter school board developers need to determine how the board can organize itself in order to function as an effective, future-focused leadership team.

Develop a shared vision of the organization's future.

A key strategic planning question for the board is: "If we could create the charter school of our dreams that will have the impact we most desire, what would that look like?" The board's answer to this question captures the organization's vision.

Keep up with the rapid pace of change.

Another strategy for nurturing visionary leadership is to help the board keep up with the rapid pace of change. Provide information that helps the board think about these key questions: What external changes and trends will have the greatest impact over the next three to five years on the charter school and the children and families it serves? How can the charter school effectively respond to these changes and trends? How are other schools and organizations serving youth responding to these changes and trends?

Stay in touch with the changing needs of your "customers."

The fifth strategy for transforming the leadership style of the board is to provide members with information to enable them to stay in touch with the changing needs of children and families served by the charter school – now and in the future. Key questions include: What do our constituents, primarily children and their families enrolled in the charter school, think of the organization? What is their perception or image of the charter school? What are the most important future needs and service expectations of the charter school on the part of our constituents?

⁵ Carver, John, *Boards That Make a Difference*, 2nd Ed., Jossey-Bass, 1997.





Learn More about Strategic Planning and Thinking

Full Resource Guide

www.uscharterschools.org/gb/governance/

Tools Available in Online Resource Guide

Description of Strategic Planning Model
Strategic Planning Committee Description
Strategic Planning Information Gathering Worksheets
Critical Issue Worksheet
Worksheet: Foremost Critical Issues Facing the Charter School
Sample Strategic Planning Timetables

Additional Resources for Strategic Planning

Allison, Michael, and Kaye, Jude, Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997.

Barry, Bryan W., Strategic Planning Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations, Revised, Saint Paul, Minnesota: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1997.

Bryson, John M., and Alston, Farnum K., Creating and Implementing Your Strategic Planning, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996.

Bryson, John M., Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, Revised, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995.

Hundley DeKuyper, Mary, Trustee Handbook: A Guide to Effective Governance for Independent School Boards, National Association of Independent Schools, 1998. (Especially useful is Chapter 4 - "Developing a Shared Vision and Planning Strategically".)

McNamara, Carter, PhD, Facilitator's Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning, Minneapolis, Minnesota: The Management Assistance Program, 1997.

O'Connor, Judith, The Planning Committee: Shaping Your Future, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1997.



ISSUES

As a relatively new phenomenon, charter schools involve legal requirements and responsibilities which not only differ widely from state to state, but which may also change over time. The following are just some of the issues that can mire boards into prolonged bouts of putting out fires, being reactive, rather than forward-thinking and proactive:

- conflicts of interest
- uncertainty regarding whether an appropriate education is being provided to all students (especially special education children), and
- unresolved fiduciary and legal matters.

Charter schools are operating under intense public scrutiny. Powerful forces opposed to charter schools continue to raise questions about the legitimacy of the movement, making it critical for charter school boards to pay special attention to carrying out their legal and financial responsibilities.



STRATEGIES

Educate board members about their legal and financial responsibilities. Board members of the charter school are the ethical, legal and financial stewards

CHALLENGE 6

CARRYING OUT LEGAL AND FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

All charter school developers and operators face complex legal issues in starting and running their schools. Charter board developers need to learn the best possible ways for the charter school board to carry out its legal and financial oversight responsibilities.

of the school. As such, the board must actively exercise oversight functions in four governance areas: corporate law, internal policies, and procedures/contracts with third parties; local, state, and federal laws/regulations; the charter school's financial resources, facilities, and equipment; and risk management. Board members must be well-informed about all four areas, know how to monitor the organization's financial position, and understand their roles versus board and committee roles in the oversight responsibilities.

Implement a conflict of interest policy.

When the personal or professional concerns of a board member or a staff member affect his or her ability to put the welfare of the charter school before personal benefit, a conflict of interest exists. The charter school board should institute a system of checks and balances to circumvent actual or potential conflict of interest, beginning with well-defined operating policies on all matters that might lead to conflict. Most importantly, create a carefully written conflict of interest policy that includes three essential elements: full disclosure; board member abstention from discussion and voting; and, staff member abstention from decision-making.



Implement a risk management process.

Risk management is a way to minimize uncertainty by identifying real and potential risks (such as tax penalties, malpractice, and injury) facing the charter school, and taking steps to manage them. The structure of the risk management process consists of the following five steps: identifying potential risks; analyzing identified risks; selecting the most suitable techniques for eliminating or reducing identified risks; implementing the selected techniques; and, monitoring the effectiveness of the techniques, modifying as necessary.

Arrange for regular financial audits.

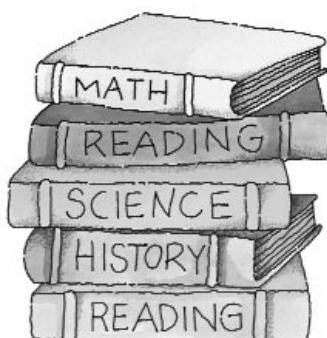
To ensure that there is progress in achieving the board's financial goals, that the school is adhering to sound financial policies, that the resources of the school's resources are safeguarded, and that the school is complying with regulatory provisions, the board should arrange for a financial audit to be conducted by a licensed independent auditing firm at least once annually or as otherwise required.

Develop special education policies prior to opening the school.

Charter school boards have a responsibility to ensure that schools receive the funding, information, and support systems to create special education programs and services. Some of the issues needing to be addressed by policies developed by the board include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. What is the philosophy of the school toward students with disabilities?
2. How will staff identify and serve students with special needs?
3. Who is responsible for serving students with disabilities?
4. What steps must charter schools take to ensure that appropriate services are provided to students with low-incidence disabilities?
5. Who pays for the services? How will transportation needs be met?
6. What personnel certification and licensure issues need to be considered?
7. Can charter schools serve only students with special needs? ⁶

⁶ Lange, Cheryl M., *Charter Schools And Special Education: A Handbook*.



Learn More about Carrying Out Legal and Financial Responsibilities

Full Resource Guide

www.uscharterschools.org/gb/governance/

Tools Available in Online Resource Guide

Conflict of Interest Policy Samples

Board Member Annual Disclosure Statement Concerning Possible Conflict Of Interest

Sample Board Confidentiality Policy

Sample Board Liability Questionnaire

Additional Resources for Understanding Board Legal and Financial Issues

Babcock, George and Tremper, Charles, The Nonprofit Boards' Role in Risk Management: More Than Buying Insurance, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1990.

Dalsimer, John Paul, Understanding Nonprofit Financial Statements: A Primer for Board Members, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1996.

DeKuyper, Mary Hundley, Trustee Handbook: A Guide to Effective Governance for Independent School Boards, National Association of Independent Schools, 1998.

Gardner, Laurie, Charter School Governance Toolkit, First Edition, Charter Schools Development Center, 1999.

Herman, Melanie L., and White, Leslie T., Leaving Nothing to Chance: Achieving Board Accountability through Risk Management, National Center for Nonprofit Boards and Nonprofit Risk Management Center, 1999.

Johnson, Sandra L., The Audit Committee: Key to Financial Accountability in Nonprofit Organizations, The National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1995.

Kurtz, Daniel L., How to Manage Conflict of Interest: a Guide for Nonprofit Boards, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1995.

Lange, Cheryl M., Charter Schools And Special Education: A Handbook.
Go to: http://www.uscharterschools.org/pub/uscs_docs/gb/sped.htm.

Leifer, Jacqueline C., Glomb, Michael B., The Legal Obligations of Nonprofit Boards: A Workbook for Board Members, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1997.

US Charter Schools Website contains legal issues page and links to other resources and sample documents at http://www.uscharterschools.org/pub/uscs_docs/ta/legal.htm.

US Department of Education Website contains additional information and resources on special education at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA/>.

CHALLENGE 7

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE BOARD-STAFF RELATIONS

The selection and support of the charter school administrator is one of the most critical roles and responsibilities of the board. With that in mind, charter school board developers must help the board build and maintain an effective, mutually supportive working relationship with the charter school administrator.

Create a chart detailing by major areas of organizational decision-making (finance, planning, personnel, etc.) the specific responsibilities of the administrator and the board of directors.

Negotiate a communication plan between the board and administration about how much information is desired, the best ways to share information, and in general, how to maintain effective communication with each other.

Develop an administrator performance review process that evaluates the administrator on negotiated performance objectives, and that is adapted to meet the specific needs of the school and your particular governance structure.

Develop conflict resolution policies which include details about what situations require professional mediation and when conflict situations should be delegated to personnel or executive committees.

ISSUES

Common problems in the area of board-staff relations include:

- conflicts over responsibilities
- board member perceptions that the charter school administrator is over-stepping his or her authority
- staff withholding information from the board
- administrator perception that the board is not doing enough, and
- a micro-managing board.

STRATEGIES

There are a number of tools and practices that can be used to strengthen the relationship between the board and the administrator.

Implement an effective hiring/selection process for the charter school administrator.

Create written job descriptions for board members and the administrator, detailing position requirements and responsibilities.





Learn More about Developing Effective Board-Staff Relations

Full Resource Guide

www.uscharterschools.org/gb/governance/

Tools Available in Online Resource Guide

Division of Roles between Board and Administrator

Board And Staff Roles Worksheet

Sample Job Descriptions For The Administrator

EXCEL Principal Evaluation Form

Principal Evaluation Form

Board Staff Time And Attention Graph

Should Staff Serve on the Board?

Additional Resources for Building Board-Staff Relations

Pierson, Jane, and Mintz, Joshua, Assessment of the Chief Executive, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1999. Visit www.ncnb.org. (This publication includes a diskette containing an assessment tool for annual reviews.)



CHALLENGE 8

DEVELOPING FRUITFUL BOARD-COMMUNITY/PARENT RELATIONS

The eighth challenge focuses on the board forging strong relationships with parents and community members. The charter school board can play a critical role in developing partnerships and collaborations that tap the resources of the community, enhancing the school's capacity to meet the educational needs of its children.



ISSUES

Common barriers to healthy community/parent and board relationships include:

- board members and school staff who feel so overwhelmed by the day-to-day tasks of educating children that they overlook the value of involving families and community
- parents who may not be used to being active participants in their children's schools, and
- community members who may be unaware of a charter school's mission and educational programs and the important role that they can play in efforts to successfully educate the community's children.



STRATEGIES

Building a relationship with parents and community is a two-way street. The board will first need to listen to parents and the community, and communicate and report to them about the charter school. There are several activities that board members can participate in to promote parent involvement and community collaboration. Activities include:

Listen to parents and community members.

Send out surveys to solicit input before major policy decisions, host regular informal opportunities to meet and hear concerns, convene a series of community forums to discuss challenges to the charter school, write personalized letters to major donors, and organize personal interviews with leading family service agencies to develop collaborative programs.

Use advisory groups of parents and community members.

Groups of parents and community members can be convened to help raise money, serve as advocates for the charter school to the community, provide feedback from the community, and provide a means for involving people who are willing to give technical assistance.

Develop a community planning process for raising student achievement.

Use engagement strategies for involving parents and the community in planning several key student achievement-related areas (assessment process, student standards, etc.). Strategies might include holding community forums to discuss what standards should be set for your students and including community members in regular reevaluation of the school's student achievement vision.





Learn More about Developing Fruitful Board- Community/Parent Relations

Full Resource Guide

www.uscharterschools.org/gb/governance/

Tools Available in Online Resource Guide

Model Parent/Family Involvement Policy
Plan for Parent and Family Involvement
Sample Advisory Committee Description
Sample Parent Involvement Policy
Why The Board Should Consider Volunteer Issues

Additional Resources for Building Parent and Community Relations

Arsenault, Jane, Forging Nonprofit Alliances, Jossey-Bass, 1998.

Axelrod, Nancy R., Creating and Renewing Advisory Boards: Strategies for Success, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1990.

Calfee, Carol, Wittwer, Frank, and Meredith, Mimi, Building a Full-service School: a Step-by-step Guide, Jossey-Bass, 1998. (This publication includes diskettes with numerous planning forms and worksheets)

Creating Family Friendly Charter Schools Guidebook, another Making Connections technical assistance product offered by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Charter Friends National Network. Visit www.uscharterschools.org/gb/familyfriendly/

Dryfoos, Joy G. Full-service Schools, Jossey-Bass, 1984.

Leadership for Student Achievement: A Board of Education Framework (Go to: www.nsba.org. Click on "Key Work of School Boards").

National Association of Partners in Education, Inc. Business And Education: a Practical Guide to Creating and Managing Business/Education Partnerships, 1990.

National Association of Partners in Education, Inc., Organizing and Managing School Volunteer Programs, 1987.

PTA Family Involvement Standards, Go to <http://www.pta.org/programs/pfistand.htm#Research>

Rackham, Neil, Friedman, Lawrence, and, Ruff, Richard, Getting Partnering Right, McGraw-Hill, 1996.

Sample Contracts with Parents (US Charter Schools website at http://www.uscharterschools.org/pub/uscs_docs/sd/menu.htm.)

Stern, Gary J., Marketing Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations: Mobilize People for Marketing Success, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1997.

The National Assembly, The Community Collaboration Manual, The National Assembly, 1993.

U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Reaching All Families: Creating Family-Friendly Schools, 1996.

Winer, Michael and Ray, Karen, Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining and Enjoying the Journey, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1992.



CHALLENGE 9

ENCOURAGING BOARD MEMBER MOTIVATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Encouraging long-term commitment and maintaining high-performance of charter school board members can be an ongoing challenge. Charter school board developers need to consider how the charter school board can create an environment that fosters and maintains a high level of board member motivation and accountability.



ISSUES

Board members offer their time, skills, knowledge, energy, and commitment. But their service is part of a larger mutually beneficial relationship as they receive an opportunity to serve an organization they believe in, a chance to learn new skills and acquire new knowledge, an opportunity to be around people that share the same values, and the opportunity to forge strong personal and professional connections. Several problems may result if this two-way transaction breaks down including:

- board members may stop contributing
- board actions and board member values may become misaligned, and
- a general sense of dissatisfaction on the board.



STRATEGIES

There are several tools that can be utilized to maintain and increase board member commitment and performance.

Align the board members with the organization.

Once again, the key to motivation and accountability has its roots in the early nominations and recruitment process — when interviewing prospective board members, it is important that there is a solid initial match between the board member and the organization. Ask questions that help you understand candidates' interests and motivations in serving as a board member of your school. Be sure that they understand the challenges and requirements of board service, and help them determine if service on the board will meet their needs and align with their interests, values, and beliefs.

Develop an ongoing recognition program.

Recognition of board members is one of the most powerful motivational strategies to encourage commitment and high-performance in the future, and is well worth the extra time and effort. Show appreciation often and in informal and formal ways. Make it appropriate to performance, meaningful, public, and fun. Recognition can take place in many forms — notes, emails, plaques, awards, prizes, etc.

Use board members' skills and add to their knowledge base.

Involve board members in areas where they feel they can use their skills and knowledge and add real value. Make training opportunities available to board members to increase skills and knowledge.

Put into place an annual board self-evaluation program.

Developing a process that allows the board to step back and look at itself will provide feedback on individual and group performance, and help develop corrective action strategies. There are several self-evaluation tools that are ready-made, or you can develop your own self-evaluation process.

Develop individual accountability contracts.

Determine strategies for holding board members accountable for attendance, contribution of expertise, willingness to make constructive comments during meetings, and representation of the charter school board in the broader community.





Learn More about Encouraging Board Member Motivation and Accountability

Full Resource Guide

www.uscharterschools.org/gb/governance/

Tools Available in Online Resource Guide

Board Self-evaluation Questionnaire

Individual Board Member Self-Review Form

Board Leadership Succession Process

Additional Resources for Board Member Motivation and Accountability

Wolfe, Rebecca Luhn, Systematic Succession Planning, Crisp Publications, 1996.



CHALLENGE 10

CREATING EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES

Committees are indispensable – they do the bulk of the work of the charter school board, freeing the full board for attention to matters like responding to emerging critical issues, strategic planning, major policy development and long range financial planning. Charter school board developers need to develop strategies for helping the board to design and maintain a committee structure that enhances its overall effectiveness.



ISSUES

Typically committees don't work well for many of the same reasons boards don't function effectively, including:

- the lack of long-term agendas
- reliance on poor or incomplete information, and
- the failure to distinguish between board level and operational issues.



STRATEGIES

Develop a written committee description.

To guide the committee chair and members, describe what is expected of each committee, offering details about the purpose of the committee, its composition and selection procedures, and its specific duties.

Nominate an effective committee chair.

Choose a board member who has relevant content knowledge and experience, and most importantly, has proven leadership and people skills.

Appoint members thoughtfully.

Committees should be recruited with the following question in mind: What tasks

are the committee responsible for and who among our members and supporters possesses the skills and experience needed to complete those tasks? As is the case with other forms of volunteer recruitment, every effort should be made to match the needs and requirements of the committee and the skills, knowledge and interests of prospective committee members.

Detail what the board expects from each committee.

Clearly communicate to all board committees what kind of reporting is expected and with what frequency.

Ensure well-run meetings.

Provide for meeting space that matches the needs of the group, and offer a written meeting agenda. Make sure that committee members receive an agenda in advance of meetings and have all of the information they will need to complete their work.

Provide training.

Schedule orientation for new committee members. Provide on-going training for committee members to help sharpen their skills.





Learn More about Creating Effective Committees

Full Resource Guide

www.uscharterschools.org/gb/governance/

Tools Available in Online Resource Guide

Sample Committee Descriptions

Sample Committee Descriptions from ISACS and/or Mosaica Academy Charter School

Committee Meeting Evaluation Form

Committee Chair Job Description and Committee Member Job Description

Committee Preference Form (can be used with prospective board members during recruitment and annually with current board members)

Annual Board Committee Report

Sample Annual Board and Committee Calendar

Additional Resources for Effective Committees

Hirzy, Ellen Cochran, Nonprofit Board Committees, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1993. Visit www.ncnb.org. (The National Center for Nonprofit Boards also publishes booklets on individual committees including Audit, Executive, Nominating, Finance, Fund Development and Planning.)



CHALLENGE 11

FOSTERING FUND-RAISING

Plain and simple, many charter schools cannot meet their budgets by relying only on the per pupil allocation of public school financing. Other sources of funds must be tapped and among these, board driven fund-raising is one of the most important. Charter school developers need to help boards to play an effective and ongoing role in fundraising.



ISSUES

Common problems involving board members in school fund-raising include:

- few board members see themselves serving as fundraisers
- some perceive fund raising as personally distasteful, and
- others are unsure of their ability to raise funds and see it as someone else's duty.



STRATEGIES

Despite such hesitations and fear, the bottom line is that board members are critical to the fund raising success of the charter school.

There are several methods for ensuring successful board fund-raising. These include the following:

Make sure that every board member fully understands, accepts, and gives full attention to several principles:

- The board is ultimately responsible for attracting funding resources to ensure the financial viability of the charter school and its educational and support programs.
- Asking for and giving money are natural processes and need not be viewed as something to be avoided.

- Board members should help in preparing the "case," which is the rationale for supporting the charter school, and be able to explain the case persuasively to prospective donors.
- Every board member can do something useful to support the fundraising effort, employing his or her own skills and interests.
- Motivation of board members is the most critical and the most difficult task of all. Indifference will not raise money. Board members and staff need to be enthusiastic about the purpose of the charter school and show eagerness to be involved.

Create a strong fund development committee.

Develop a standing committee whose purpose is to plan, organize, and build successful fund-raising campaigns. Responsibilities include:

- Soliciting current board members. The goal of every fund development committee is to get 100 percent board participation.
- Recruiting fund-raising volunteers, and developing and implementing a program for orienting and soliciting funds from volunteers.



- Developing written plans, estimated budgets, and dollar goals for fund-raising programs to be reviewed and ratified by the charter school's board. These plans, reflecting a period of at least three years, should be reviewed semi-annually for appropriate payoffs and cost/benefit adjustments.
- Developing and conducting annual personal solicitation programs on behalf of the board to major donors, corporations and foundations that have been identified as potential supporters of the charter school.
- Organizing and conducting special event fund-raising programs.
- Assisting in development and maintenance of donor records and reporting procedures.
- Evaluating fund-raising successes at least once a year, and making appropriate recommendations to the board for maximizing results.

Offer training to support the board's fund-raising role.

Many board members don't want to raise money because they don't know how. This reluctance can be countered by simply asking them if they would be willing to try if the charter school offers them support and training. Often this will increase their confidence to get involved.

Create a fund development plan.

The financial development plan sets goals for the charter school's income, typically over a three-to five-year span, incorporating specific objectives and action steps that will help the charter school acquire and effectively use the financial resources it needs. Done properly, a good fund development plan will help the charter school take advantage of strengths, shore up weaknesses, open up opportunities and diffuse threats to the charter school's financial well-being.

Develop the fund-raising case.

An important responsibility of the board's fund development committee is to create a fund-raising case statement. The case looks at the charter school from the perspective of the supporter, setting forth the reasons why the donor/prospect should want to contribute to your charter school. Interpreting and explaining the mission of the organization, the case essentially answers the questions why, what, who, and how.





Learn More about Fostering Fund-raising

Full Resource Guide

www.uscharterschools.org/gb/governance/

Tools Available in Online Resource Guide

Sample Fund-raising Committee Description

Sample Resource Development Committee

Additional Resources for Board Involvement in Fund-raising

Boschee, Jerr, Merging Money and Mission: A Board Member's Guide to Social Entrepreneurship, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1998.
The Foundation Center (<http://fdncenter.org>)

Brinckerhoff, Peter C., Financial Empowerment: More Money for Mission, John Wiley and Sons, 1996.

DeKuyper, Mary Hundley, Trustee Handbook: A Guide to Effective Governance for Independent School Boards, National Association of Independent Schools, 1998. Take a look at Chapter 5. (www.nais.org)

Howe, Fisher, Fund Raising and the Nonprofit Board, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1998. (www.ncnb.org)

Klein, Kim, Grassroots Fundraising Journal, Chardon Press. (www.chardonpress.com.)

National Association of Fund Raising Executives. (www.nsfre.org.)

Scanlon, Eugene A., Corporate and Foundation Fund Raising, Aspen Publishers, 1997.

School Endowment: Sample Policy Statement (See the following website: Independent Schools Association of the Central States at www.isacs.org; click on "Monographs", then scroll down and click on "Business Operations" for sample school endowment policies.)

Thorton, Grant, Planned Giving: A Board Member's Perspective, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1999.



ISSUES

Board assessment is a relatively new practice. Resistance to instituting a self-assessment process may occur because of two primary reasons:

- evaluation of governing boards' performance is not yet a common practice, and
- board members may feel threatened and judged.



STRATEGIES

Board members, even though they are volunteers, want their time and skills to be used well; they do not want them wasted. With the goal of board assessment as improvement, not judgment, boards will find great value in examining their performance, and the charter school will benefit greatly as well.

There are several tools available to assess a board's performance. A good assessment process is based on a set of standards or best practices that characterize effective board performance. The charter school board can develop its own written self-assessment tool or use off-the-shelf board assessment instruments, such as:

Board Self-assessment Questionnaire. This self-assessment is also available online at the Website of the National School Boards Association (www.nsba.org).

CHALLENGE 12

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT

Because so much is riding on the effectiveness of the board in carrying out its roles and responsibilities, it is important that the board spends time looking at its own performance in order to improve it. Charter school board developers will need to institute a self-assessment process to continuously help the board enhance its effectiveness.

Self-Assessment For Nonprofit

Governing Boards. This assessment tool is available from the National Center for Nonprofit Boards (www.ncnb.org), and examines both individual board members and the performance of the board as a whole.

Charter School Board Of Directors Self-Assessment Template.

This assessment, available from the Charter School Development Center (www.cacharter-schools.org), reflects basic rules and responsibilities of the board as well as a number of explicit references to items like compliance with state and federal laws, instruction and assessment, and terms of the school's charter contract.

Board Development Assessment Tool.

This assessment is available from the Learning Institute for Nonprofit Organizations.⁷ It includes sections on internal procedures, operational matters and financial management responsibilities. It also includes a sample work plan for implementing the results of a board self-assessment.

⁷ Lewis, Andrew, *Board Development Assessment Tool*, The Learning Institute for Nonprofit Organizations, 1999.





Learn More about Developing Effective Board Self-assessment

Full Resource Guide

www.uscharterschools.org/gb/governance/

Tools Available in Online Resource Guide

Principles of Good Practice for Member Schools
Board Governance Indicators Assessment
Board Development Assessment Tool
Visionary Board Leadership Assessment
Exit Interview with Departing Board Members
A Framework for Continuous Improvement of Charter School Board Effectiveness
Sample Recommendations for Board Improvement

Additional Resources for Board Self-assessment

Board Tune-ups. (The Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS) has prepared a collection of 13 assessment tools for the periodic tune-up of your charter school board. Topics include: Board Bylaws, Committees, Board Evaluation, Policies, Board Recruitment, Board Structure/Meeting Pattern, Contract for Administrator, Endowment Policies, Enrollment Contract, Enrollment Policies, Faculty Contracts, Administrator Evaluation, and Long-range Planning.

The approach suggested is to compare the "best practices" ISACS version to your school board's version of policies and practices. All of the documents cited are available for free by downloading from the ISACS website: Go to www.isacs.org then click on Monographs, scroll down to Board of Trustees, and choose the appropriate monograph title. Alternatively, school board chairs can order from ISACS the tune-up package of all the monographs for a charge of \$25.00, payable to ISACS.

Charter School Governance Toolkit, First Edition, *Charter Schools Development Center*, 1999.
[Section 4 includes a "Charter School Board of Directors Self Assessment Template."
(www.cacharterschools.org)]

Hughes, Sandra, **To Go Forward, Retreat**, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1999. (This publication includes many practical suggestions and ideas for planning and conducting successful board retreats.)

Slesinger, Larry H., **Self-assessment for Nonprofit Governing Boards**, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1996.
(www.ncnb.org)

Smoley, Eugene R., **Effective School Boards: Strategies for Improving Board Performance**, Jossey-Bass, 1999.

Szanton, Peter, **Board Assessment of the Organization**, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1992.

ACCESS MORE TOOLS FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS

Guidebooks Available on Creating an Effective Charter School Governing Board, Personnel Policies & Practices, Creating and Sustaining Family Friendly Institutions, and Mobilizing and Motivating Your Staff to Get Results. These guides can be accessed online at <http://www.uscharterschools.org/gb/cfguides.htm>

The Charter Friends National Network has a limited number of print summaries of the documents available. To request a copy of one, or all four, please send an email to info@charterfriends.org.

ABOUT THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the U.S. Recognizing that strong families and strong neighborhoods are interdependent, the Casey Foundation is supporting broad strategies for neighborhood development and family transformation in twenty-two urban communities around the nation through its Making Connections initiative. For more information about the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Making Connections initiative visit the website or contact:

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Tel: (410) 547-6600

Email: webmail@aecf.org

Web: <http://www.aecf.org/initiatives/ntfd/making.htm>

The Charter Friends National Network (CFNN) is a project of the Minnesota-based Center for Policy Studies in cooperation with Hamline University. Founded in early 1997, CFNN's mission is to connect and support state-level charter school organizations - mainly non-profit resource centers and associations of charter school operators.

Charter Friends National Network:

1745 University Avenue, Suite 110

St. Paul, MN 55104

Tel: (651) 649-5479 • Fax: (651) 649-5472

Email: info@charterfriends.org

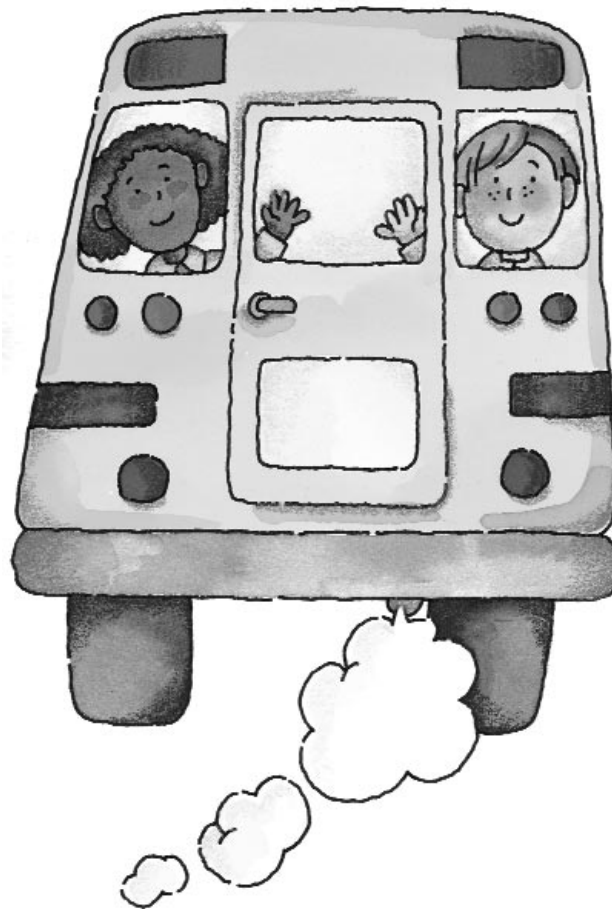
Web: <http://www.charterfriends.org>

OTHER RESOURCE GUIDES AVAILABLE FROM CHARTER FRIENDS NATIONAL NETWORK:

- ☐ Charter School Accountability: A Guide to Issues and Options for Charter Authorizers
- ☐ Charter School Facilities: A Resource Guide on Development and Financing
- ☐ Charting a Clear Course: A Resource Guide for Charter Schools Contracting with School Management Organizations
- ☐ Employer-Linked Charter Schools: An Introduction
- ☐ A Guide for Developing a Business Plan for Charter Schools
- ☐ Thinking About a Pre-existing Comprehensive School Design
- ☐ Out of the Box: An Idea Book on Charter School Facilities Financing
- ☐ Paying for the Charter Schoolhouse: Policy Options for Charter School Facilities Financing
- ☐ Shaping an Accountability Plan for Your Charter School



The Annie E. Casey Foundation



CHARTER FRIENDS
NATIONAL NETWORK

connecting and supporting state-level charter school initiatives